Commentary

Volume Sixty-eight, Number Six, December 1979

KENNEDY'S FOREIGN POLICY

What the Record Shows

Joshua Muravchik

Jewish Denial & the Holocaust — Walter Laqueur

The Politics of John Paul II — Michael Novak

Cubans in Arabia? — Edward N. Luttwak

Moscow Night in New York—A Story — Tova Reich

FICTION

Roth & Baldwin: Coming Home

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MOVIES

Tory Wit

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BOOKS

William J. Bennett
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Should Government Do More To Encourage Energy Conservation?

Conservation offers faster energy savings.

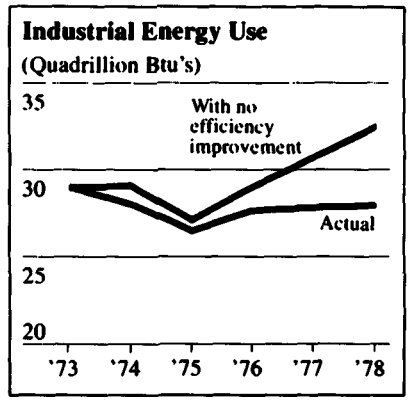
America's efforts to reduce its dependence on imported oil have most recently centered on the supply side of the energy equation. We've looked at coal, nuclear, solar and synthetic fuels and even for more domestic oil and gas, all of which have a place in the nation's energy future.

But a recent study from the Harvard Business School (*Energy Future: Report of the Energy Project at the Harvard Business School*. Edited by Robert Stobaugh and Daniel Yergin. Random House, 1979.) articulates a harsh reality in the outlook: there's no quick fix. As the study notes, technical, economic and political factors often combine to delay—for better or worse—the development of these additional sources of energy.

The urgency in these conclusions is loud and clear. If only modest amounts of new energy are available on the supply side in the near term, the nation needs a *transitional* energy source. Compelling evidence indicates that conservation—new energy from the *demand* side—is the fastest, cheapest, cleanest and most abundant new energy around. According to Stobaugh and Yergin, appropriate public policies could stimulate enough "extra conservation" to reduce imported oil's share of America's total energy supply from 24 percent in 1977 to 17 percent by the late 1980's. But how do we get "extra conservation"?

Higher energy prices aren't enough.

It's true that the rapid increase in energy prices since 1973 has been a powerful incentive to conserve.



Improvements in industrial energy efficiency, for example, saved the equivalent of two million barrels of oil per day in 1978 over what would have been required to do the same job in 1973.

Yet higher prices can't induce *all* the conservation we need to cut our dependence on foreign oil significantly in the next ten years. The irony is one well known to any consumer: sometimes you just can't afford to spend money in order to save money.

In this sense, homeowners, commercial property owners and industry are all in the same boat. They have to choose among competing demands on their financial resources—and can't make all the energy conservation investments they need. The result is that there's less private investment in energy conservation than national priorities would otherwise require.

New incentives are needed.

Proposals to encourage greater production of "conservation energy" are now being considered in the Congress. Together with the phased decontrol of energy prices, they offer important new incentives to help reduce America's dependence on imported oil.

The leading proposals—sponsored by Senators Kennedy and Durkin and Senators Wallop and Simpson—come at a critical time. Many consumers and companies have already completed the obvious projects that conserve energy at relatively little expense. What lies ahead are the big ticket items, things like new furnaces and new factories which embody new conservation technologies.

The Senators are proposing financial incentives to speed the nation's investment in energy conservation projects. The mechanisms under consideration vary considerably, and some will doubtless prove more effective in delivering "conservation energy" than others. But we think such approaches —which rely on a combination of public incentives and private judgments —are powerful tools for achieving energy security.

For more information, write "Conservation," Union Carbide Corporation, Box G-23, 270 Park Avenue, New York, New York 10017.

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Commentary

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Cover: The Drawing Board, Inc.

COMMENTARY is published monthly by the American Jewish Committee—Single copy is $2.50, $24 a year; 3 years $64; 5 years $96—Add $4.00 per year for all foreign, including Canada and Latin America—Second class postage paid at New York, N.Y. and at additional mailing offices.

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Indexed in *Readers' Guide, Book Review Digest, Public Affairs Information Service, Index to Jewish Periodicals, ABC Pol Sci, Historical Abstracts,* and *America: History and Life*—Unsolicited manuscripts must be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed return envelope. Publication Number ISSN 0010-2601
EDITORIAL & BUSINESS OFFICES: 165 E. 56th St., New York, N.Y. 10022

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Letters from Readers

Afghanistan

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In "A New Soviet Strategy" [October], Francis Fukuyama misrepresents an article of mine in the Washington *Post* (May 13, 1979) analyzing the background of the Communist coup in Afghanistan and the policy options now confronting the United States in South Asia.

If I may briefly summarize what I elaborated in 3,000 words, my article made the following major points (the quotations are from the article):

1. The Kabul coup "came about when it did, and in the way that it did" as the tragic culmination of a cycle of challenge and response set in motion by the Shah with U.S. encouragement. Throughout the cold war, Moscow had given little encouragement to the Afghan Communists, supporting a succession of conservative Kabul regimes so long as they pursued a Soviet-tilted brand of neutralism. Moscow began to change this policy only after the Shah sought to draw the Daud regime into a Western-tilted, Teheran-centered, regional economic and security sphere beginning in 1974. As Daud moved increasingly to the Right in his foreign and domestic policies, Moscow reacted by taking a new interest in Afghan Communist affairs. The Communists were just beginning to build a unified organization with Soviet help when Daud staged his unsuccessful preemptive strike against the party in April 1978, ordering the assassination of a key Communist trade unionist and the mass arrest of other party leaders. It was Daud who provoked the showdown struggle in which the Communists seized power.

2. Evidence available to date indicates that the coup was a hastily improvised, eleventh-hour affair, and "it is misleading, therefore, to depict it as a deliberate Soviet gambit in the global strategic chess game." At the same time, given the extent of the Soviet military and intelligence presence in Kabul, it is difficult to believe that there was no Russian involvement. The unusually effective precision bombing of key targets during the critical moments of the fighting strongly suggested the use of Soviet pilots. "Eventually, Moscow would no doubt have tried to put the Communists into power in one way or another, given the political vacuum that Daud had created by abolishing the monarchy and failing to replace it with another viable system. As it happened, however, events forced the Communists to stage their coup long before they were organizationally prepared to govern the country."

3. Although Moscow's client regime is narrowly based, one should bear in mind that the Islamic rebels opposing it also have serious weaknesses. Divided by ethnic, sectarian, and personality conflicts, they do not command a degree of popular allegiance comparable to that enjoyed by the Khomeini forces in their struggle against the Shah. Afghanistan is in for "a protracted, slow-burning civil war in which the outcome may not be clear for some time."

4. Faced with such an uncertain prospect, the United States would be wise to maintain a hands-off policy, "seeking to keep the onus on Moscow for any expansion of hostilities between Kabul and its neighbors." Pressures for U.S. help are likely to grow, but American involvement would be risky because Moscow might feel compelled to retaliate, unleashing guerrillas of its own in politically vulnerable border areas of Pakistan and Iran as a means of relieving pressure on Kabul. Pro-Kabul and Pushtun tribal separatists are increasingly active in these border areas. Soviet ideologists have long emphasized that the Baluch and Pushtuns are separate nationalities and have given intermittent support to the separatist cause. But Moscow has downplayed separatism in recent years as part of its larger effort to offset Chinese influence in Islamabad and Teheran. It is not inevitable that Moscow will invite the risks of a Balkanization strategy, and in any case, pro-Kabul elements are not yet dominant in Baluch and Pushtun politics. Pakistan and Iran still have time to build up their anti-Soviet defenses by coming to terms with Baluch and Pushtun moderates on constitutional and economic issues.

According to Mr. Fukuyama's paraphrased version, I said that Moscow had "a right to install a pro-Communist regime in Kabul," while treating Afghanistan as beyond "our own sphere of legitimate action." As the above indicates,

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however, he has put words in my mouth. My article did not discuss our competition with the Soviet Union in terms of what is legitimate, but rather in terms of what is effective. Thus, I showed that it was counterproductive for Daud and the Shah to have polarized the power struggle in Kabul, however legitimate it might have been, and that the Soviet response to their pressures, however deplorable, was not only eminently predictable but had, in fact, been explicitly anticipated by the British Ambassador. By the same token, my primary reason for advising against Western support for the anti-Kabul rebels now is that this might make an already bad situation considerably worse by exposing politically spongy border areas of Pakistan and Iran to potentially damaging Soviet countermoves.

Mr. Fukuyama disregards the complex regional realities that I emphasize, and the few brief references to the domestic dynamics of Afghanistan that he does make reveal astonishing ignorance. Referring to Daud's right-wing, feudally-based autocracy, he informs us that it was typical of "left-wing nationalist regimes" in the Third World. Yet the point of departure for an informed discussion of recent events in Kabul is the fact that Afghanistan has never had a significant left-wing nationalist alternative to the Communists. Despite his initial pro-Moscow foreign policy tilt following his 1973 coup, Daud's domestic economic and social policies were at best centrist and in most respects ultra-conservative. More important, once he had taken power, he proceeded to affront nationalist sentiment and play into the hands of the Communists by concluding the bitterly controversial Helmand treaty with Iran and another unpopular agreement with Pakistan ending Afghan support of Baluch and Pushtun separatists.

In general, Mr. Fukuyama's comments are singularly misdirected, since I am one of the few American observers who argued over the past thirty years that Afghanistan did belong within the legitimate sphere of American action and should be given much greater emphasis in both economic and military aid. During the Dulles period, I warned repeatedly that American military alignment with Pakistan for the sake of short-term intelligence advantages would prove disastrous, in the long run, by antagonizing Afghanistan and opening the way for Soviet penetration of the Afghan armed forces. For three decades, the United States has lost one opportunity after another to influence the outcome in Afghanistan when the environment for its intervention was relatively favorable. Now, when its options are sharply circumscribed, Mr. Fukuyama rushes onto the scene, breathlessly announcing that the Russians are coming.

SELIG S. HARRISON
Carnegie Endowment for
International Peace
New York City

FRANCIS FUKUYAMA writes:

Selig S. Harrison's reasoning is similar to that of William Shawcross in a different context. We bombed Cambodia, the Khmer Rouge killed two or three million people, and yet Shawcross argues that we are the guilty ones. So with Mr. Harrison. In his article, he did not literally say that Moscow had a "right" to establish a Communist regime in Afghanistan. What he did was to present two facts: our side sought to draw Kabul into a "Western-tilted, Teheran-centered, regional economic and security sphere"; their side retaliated by overthrowing Daud and provoking a civil war which by one recent estimate has already consumed 250,000 lives. He chooses to blame our side for lack of restraint, while treating the actions of the other side as a tragic but predictable response. But the discrepancy between the provocation and the response was enormous, and by no means predictable: Daud did nothing that other Third World nations have not done, nothing that the Soviets could not have tolerated, and nothing they have not in fact tolerated prior to the late 1970's. Soviet policy, therefore, marks a departure, and for that reason is very troubling. To say that the coup was predictable is in effect to concede Moscow's right to forbid Afghanistan to seek genuine nonalignment in a situation which had little or no bearing on Soviet security.

As for my astonishing ignorance of Afghanistan's "complex regional realities," Mr. Harrison's characterization of Daud's domestic policies as "centrist and in most respects ultraconservative" strikes me as betraying, if not ignorance, certainly a willful distortion of the facts. Daud may not have lived up to Mr. Harrison's ideal of a left-wing nationalist, but he did declare a socialist ideology for Afghanistan, nationalize the banks, promise sweeping socioeconomic reforms, and create a National Revolutionary party to implement his program. In any case, Mr. Harrison's own characterization of Daud's foreign policy as "a Soviet-tilted brand of neutralism" seems to concede the better part of my point.

Finally, I could not agree more that the United States ought to have taken a more active interest in Afghanistan prior to April 1978. It may be the case that Mr. Harrison has for long argued that Kabul "should be given much greater emphasis in both economic and military aid." But then I find it very curious that he should have taken the trouble to lambaste the Shah for having done precisely that.

Intermarriage

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . David Singer's "Living with Intermarriage" [July] treats an extremely complex issue in an overly polemical manner, typified by his use of charged terms such as "accommodationist" to label those of differing opinion. In his reference to the article by Samuel Lieberman and myself in *Midstream* (November 1978), he fails to distinguish among the descriptive, analytical, and prescriptive elements in our discussion.

Mr. Singer claims that we "manage to argue simultaneously for a low birth rate and a high intermarriage rate—and to do this, moreover, in the name of Jewish survival!" We do no such thing. As we write in our conclusion: "We are not advocating high intermarriage rates or low fertility rates." We take *as given* the facts of rising intermarriage and declining fertility rates for American Jews, and assess the consequences for the Jewish population in terms of quantity, quality, and the "variety of tasks on its collective agenda."

To summarize briefly, we identify low (past and present) fertility, and not intermarriage, as the major contributor to the expected decline in Jewish population, since a significant minority of intermarried Jews, through conversion or other forms of affiliation, seek to identify with the Jewish commu-

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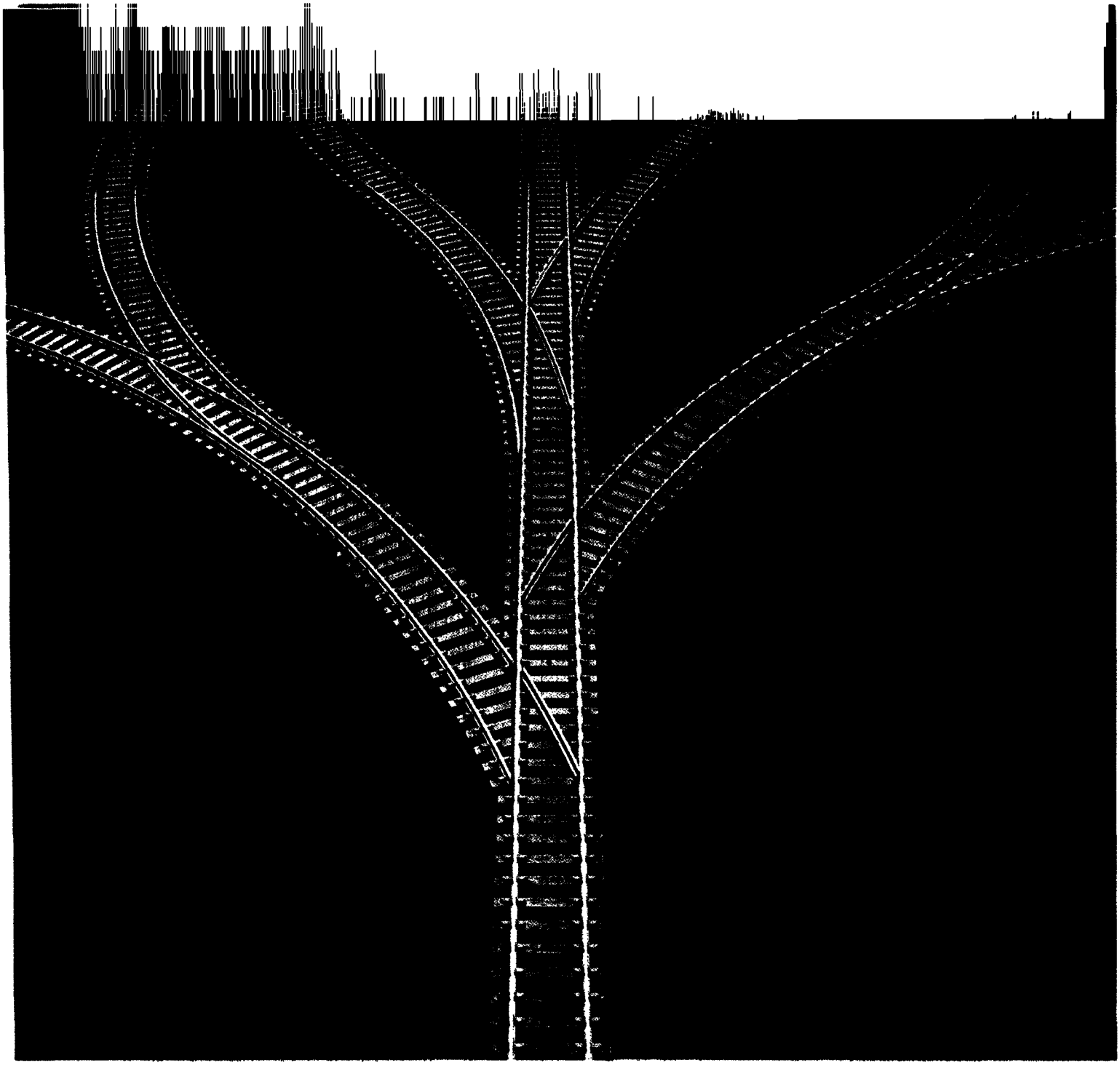

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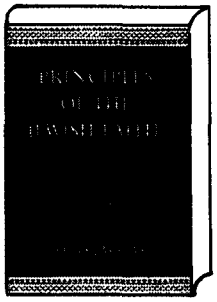

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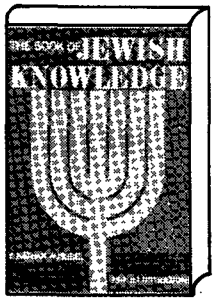

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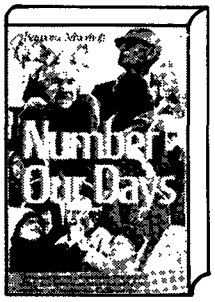

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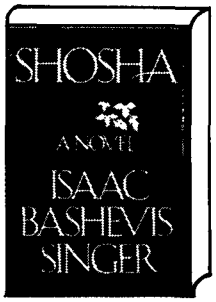

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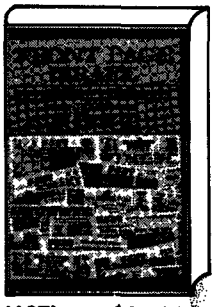

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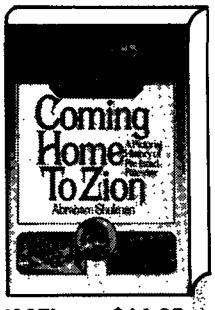

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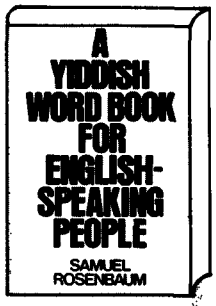

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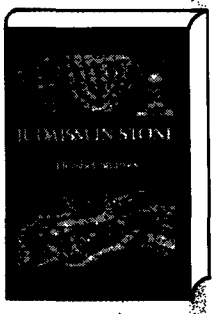

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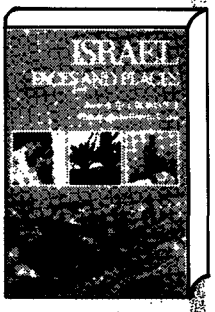

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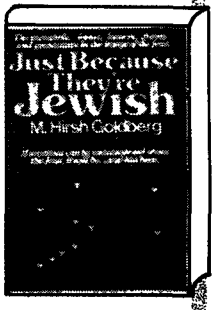

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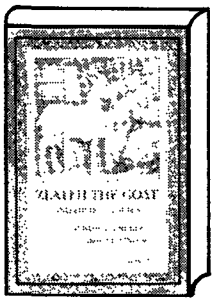

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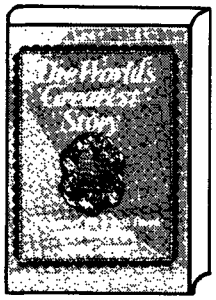

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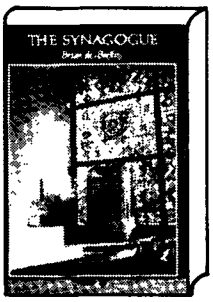

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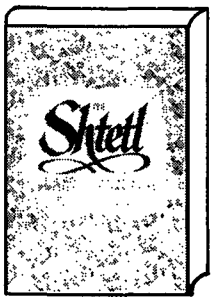

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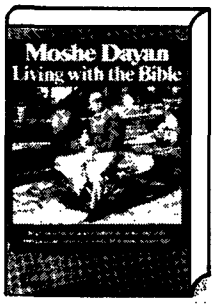

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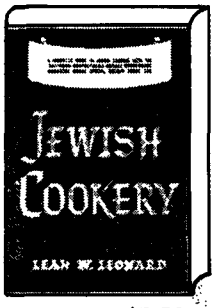

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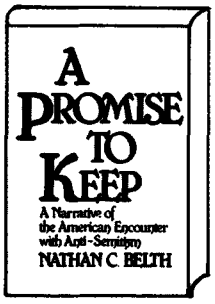

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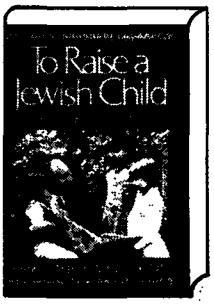

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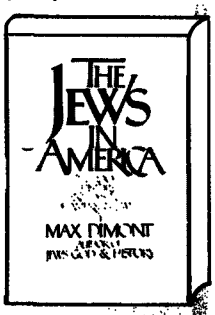

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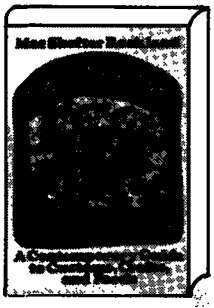

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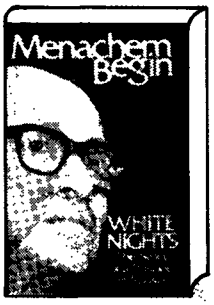

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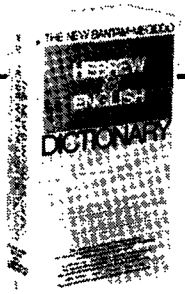

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nity. Obviously, these Jews, and certainly their children, are attempting to acquire legitimate status as Jews outside of *halakhic* definitions. Orthodox Jews and others have every right to deny these claims to legitimacy, and to reflect this in policy for Orthodox organizations or synagogues and in their own private lives. What is not immediately obvious is why the *halakhic* definition must apply when enumerating the *total population* of American Jews, in which the Orthodox are, for better or worse, a clear minority. Our concern was with the impact of alternative counting rules on any estimate of Jewish population size. . . .

Mr. Singer also takes strong objection (emotional but neither logical nor factual) to our argument that intermarriage and low fertility may have some unforeseen benefits, as well as the well-known costs, for the Jewish community. These benefits, which sociologists call "latent functions," derive from their role in creating an educated, affluent, middle-class Jewish community, in turn conducive to tasks such as the funding of Jewish communal institutions or the sophisticated defense of Jewish political interests. . . .

How much diversity can the community accommodate? Since the Jews have no Pope, the answer will be a popular, democratic one: it is emerging from the aggregated actions of individual Jews. Those who prefer their community boundaries tightly drawn are no doubt dismayed by the ensuing confusion. Since the Jewish community speaks with many voices, one finds support for both the "open-door" and the "hard-line" positions on intermarriage.

My view is that the social forces leading to intermarriage may be too powerful for Jewish community policy to counteract. At any rate, the case for spending on Jewish education, for example, should be made on intrinsic merits and not linked to anticipated reductions in intermarriage. The best policy payoff for the community would lie, I suggest, in ameliorative, "post-hoc" policies, as is suggested by the numerous conversions which occur *following* intermarriages.

Finally, in discussing intermarriage, we are discussing human beings in love. Intermarrying Jews often agonize over their decisions and are torn among the conflicting loves of partner, parents, and, yes, (the Jewish) people. Some make sincere attempts to perpetuate their Jewish commitment, others seek expedient Reform intermarriages with little Jewish content. No constructive purpose is served by Mr. Singer's describing this latter group as "the community's dirty laundry." Moreover, by discounting even the possibility of a collective Jewish population gain through intermarriage, Mr. Singer casts doubt on the integrity of all converts, those of convenience and those of commitment.

MORTON WEINFELD
McGill University
Montreal, Canada

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

David Singer points out the problem, and it is very real indeed, but he leaves us with little or no solution, other than to confront the phenomenon of assimilation as it affects the Jewish community.

What is required is a removal of those blinders the Jewish community conveniently keeps in its back pocket for just such unpleasant emergencies. . . . Whether we like it or not, the number of marriages involving a Jewish and a non-Jewish partner will continue rising for many years to come. Crying *gevalt* will not help, berating the synagogue and the rabbi will not help, attempting to dissuade the couple will not help. What is required is a greater effort to involve the individual couples. . . . . It is beneficial neither for the couple nor for Judaism to make rules and regulations so rigid that the couple either cannot enter the world of Judaism at all, or else can enter it so easily and with so little commitment that Judaism appears worthless. Both these extremes—the strict *halakhists* and the rabbinical "marrying Sams"—are to be avoided. . . .

Conversion of the non-Jewish partner-to-be is the ultimate goal, but that conversion cannot be based on trying to make "the Jewish side" happy. Real conversion comes only after study, after living with Judaism, and after the Jewish partner rediscovers the impact of Judaism on his or her life. No hard and fast timetable should be established . . . because one cannot designate the precise minute or hour when one suddenly "wants to be Jewish." The prospective bride and groom need to be shown how vital they are to the Jewish future, and how greatly their lives could be enhanced if they chose to practice Judaism. . . .

Slogans won't bring this about, citing statistics won't do it, and studies regarding assimilation won't do it. The only way two people of differing religions will be guided to the point of resolving those differences is by finding some individual, one would hope a rabbi, who cares enough to study with them, learn with them, explain to them all aspects of Judaism. . . . It takes time. It is not easy. It will not work for all, but it does hold out some positive promise for the future of Judaism.

[Rabbi] HOWARD A. SIMON
Congregation Beth Israel
Margate, New Jersey

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

David Singer states in his article that "we do not know" what the effects are of secular and religious education, residential segregation, etc. upon the formation of Jewish intermarriages. If Mr. Singer had consulted my article, "Studies of Jewish Intermarriage in the United States," in the 1968 issue of the *American Jewish Year Book*. . . he would have found some of the answers. A more recent paper of mine, entitled "Intermarriage Among Jewry: A Function of Acculturation, Community Organization, and Family Structure," printed in *Movements and Issues in American Judaism* (Bernard Martin, ed., Greenwood Press, 1978), brings my earlier work up to date and considers the effects of such factors as individualism, narcissism, and the women's liberation movement upon Jewish intermarriage.

ERICH ROSENTHAL
Queens College
Flushing, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In his welcome addition to the continuing discussion on intermarriage, David Singer notes that the current discussion is characterized by increasing concern but deficient information. . . . The main obstacle to acquiring such information . . . appears to be a persistent unwillingness on the part of the Jewish community to face up to unpleasant realities and the shift in priorities and resources that they demand.

As Mr. Singer observes, most of the available information—like the National Jewish Population Survey, for example—reports attitudes rather than actual behavior: how people react (or say they do)

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to intermarriage rather than what actually happens as a result of it. The few studies that report on behavior are enlightening, but so far limited in scope, covering one or two random communities, or a small population sample. The inevitable result of this limited information is speculation on the consequences of intermarriage, involving demographic projections which inevitably reflect the biases, and hopes, of their authors.

In the face of this obvious need for better information, it continues to be a mystery why the national Jewish institutions have not responded. . . . And it is deplorable that one such institution, the Institute for Jewish Policy Studies in Washington, which demonstrated a capability and commitment to serious research in this area, was forced to close its doors for lack of support in the summer of 1979.

ELIHU BERGMAN
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

David Singer, . . . like a growing number of Jewish scholars, recognizes the problem posed to the Jewish community by intermarriage and yet he falls into what would seem to be an obvious trap: . . . the trap of creating a message for those who don't need it. . . .

I do not agree with Mr. Singer and other scholars who cite the need for finely honed statistics. What does it matter? Will we accurately predict our own demise? . . . What we have is an issue of passion, of emotion. Let it be dealt with passionately and directed to those who can do something about it: unmarried Jews approaching childbearing age and those younger products of intermarriage also looking to establish their families. . . . The message of our future, which includes the message of our past, must be brought with reason and passion to our youngsters: life is long; children and careers are possible; Judaism and Jewishness are a wondrous bounty worth having and holding. . . . The hard part is doing it—reaching the right audience. . . . I firmly believe, however, that the message will be well received, if only it is carried. . . .

WILLIAM A. GRALNICK
American Jewish Committee
Atlanta, Georgia

DAVID SINGER writes:

Stripped of its academic jargon—"latent functions," "ameliorative 'post-hoc' policies," etc.—Morton Weinfeld's letter, like his *Midstream* article, is a call for accommodation to intermarriage, pure and simple. Why he seeks to deny this, or the fact that he sees zero population growth as an important element in an "alternative survivalist perspective on the Jewish future," is beyond me.

Rabbi Howard A. Simon believes that an effort to reach out to intermarried couples "hold[s] out some positive promise for the future of Judaism." I think that it will only serve to encourage yet more mixed unions.

Erich Rosenthal, whose articles I did in fact read before preparing my essay, may be interested in what Calvin Goldscheider, an outstanding Jewish demographer, has to say: "It is obvious that the centrality of the intermarriage issue for Jewish survival . . . has not been matched by a comparable emphasis in social-science research. Indeed, one is amazed that such limited, often biased, superficial data, based on a small number of cases, in a limited number of Jewish communities have been the source of speculation, reanalyses, summaries, and reviews in hundreds of articles."

Business & the Soviets

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Carl Gershman's article, "Selling Them the Rope: Business & the Soviets" [April], contains several historical inaccuracies:

1. John Calder, whom Mr. Gershman describes as the construction manager of the Stalingrad Tractor Plant, is identified as having worked for the Austin Company. In fact, Calder did not work for Austin.

2. Austin had no involvement with the Stalingrad Tractor Plant, although the article implies that it did.

3. Leon A. Swajian, identified as Calder's colleague, was not a member of the Austin organization, although from the article one could infer that he was.

The Austin Company was, however, responsible for the construction of the automobile manufacturing complex at Gorki, as Mr. Gerhsman correctly states.

MARVIN M. EPSTEIN
The Austin Company
Cleveland, Ohio

CARL GERSHMAN writes:

Antony C. Sutton's study, *Western Technology and Soviet Economic Development*, was the source of the information which Marvin M. Epstein disputes. Mr. Sutton's reference in Volume I of the study to the Austin Company's construction of the Ford River Rouge plant was based on a Soviet source (*Torgovo-Promyshlennaya Gazeta*, July 26 and November 1, 1929). It was correctly stated in Volume II of the study that the River Rouge plant was built by Albert Kahn, Inc. I inadvertently overlooked this correction.

Sutton's statement that Calder worked for Austin while he was construction manager at the Stalingrad Tractor Plant is again based on a Russian source: *Za Industrializatsiiu* (July 5, 1930). If Austin denies this, then we must accept its denial. This, of course, would also dissociate Austin from the construction of the Stalingrad plant. Finally, I never said that Leon A. Swajian worked for Austin.

The reader should bear in mind that despite Sutton's extraordinary historical investigation, there is much that we still do not know—and may never know—about U.S. business's involvement in the economic development of the Soviet Union. Many U.S. firms instructed their employees in Russia not to discuss their work or affiliations. Some firms required employees to resign before accepting a contract with the Russians as a way of disguising their affiliation when working in the USSR. Some, however, did not heed these instructions, and Mr. Sutton was able to pick up their uncensored comments in State Department files.

Another factor which may explain the confusion over the affiliation of some employees is that Americans sometimes invented association with prominent firms like Austin to facilitate being hired by the Soviets. The Russians also may have exaggerated their associations with U.S. firms for propaganda purposes, e.g., they bragged about their association with Henry Ford. I am indebted to Mr. Sutton for enumerating some of the reasons why such mistakes could have occurred.

The really important point in all of this is not the "inaccuracies" in my article, but Mr. Epstein's admission in the last sentence of his letter: namely, that the Austin Company was responsible for the construction of the Gorki automobile

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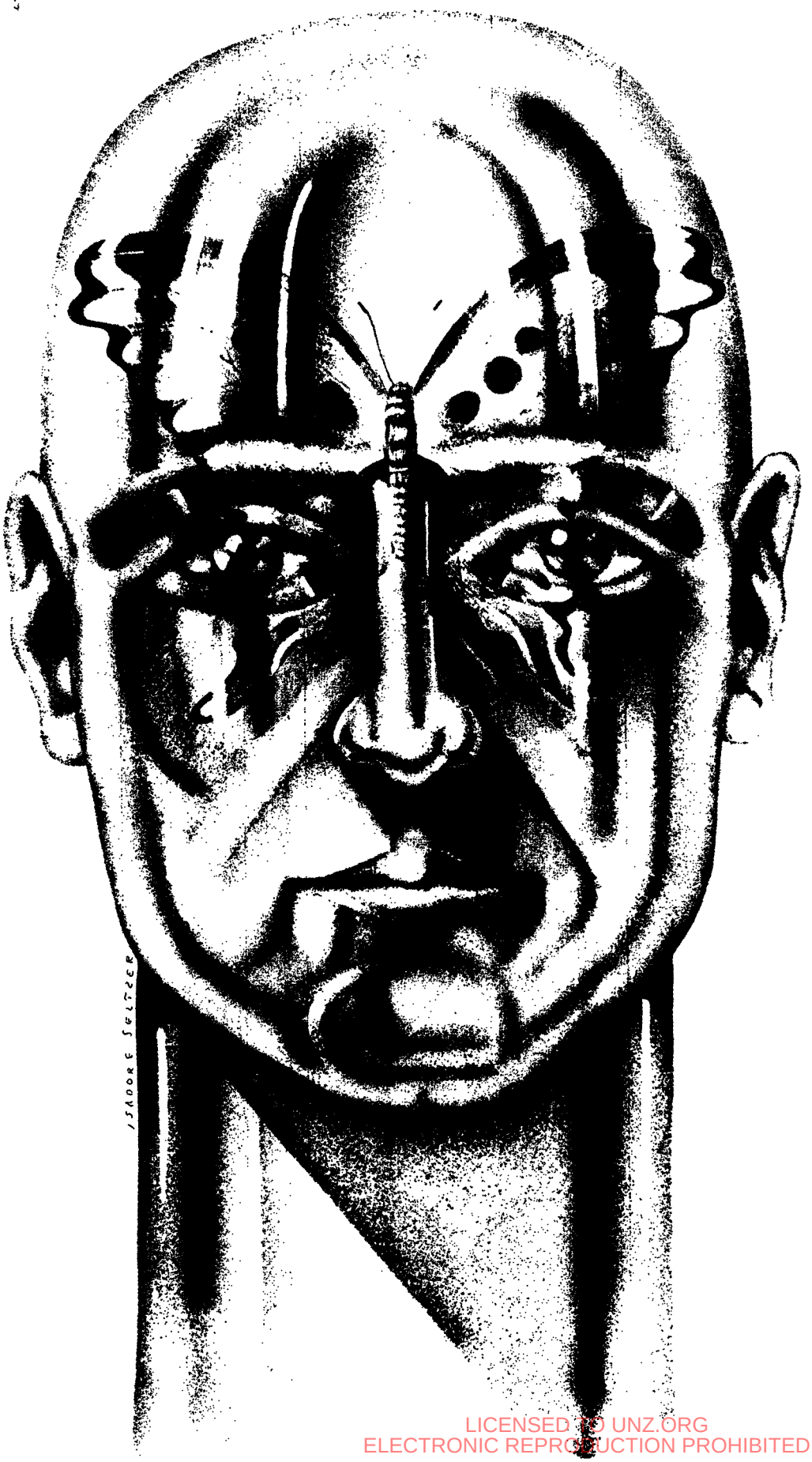

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plant. This is all that is needed to substantiate my point that American business has been "selling them the rope" and that the Austin Company has participated in this dangerously short-sighted endeavor.

Harvard Law School

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In his article, "'Human Rights' at Harvard Law School" [September], Daniel Benson criticizes Dean Albert Sacks for acquiescing in what amounted to an attempt to abridge my freedom of speech. It is true that there was an attempt to abridge my freedom of speech, but it is not true that Dean Sacks acquiesced in it. The facts are as follows: when I learned that the Third World conference had decided to bestow "guest of honor" status on a representative of the Libyan government, I called two of my friends who had been invited to speak at the conference (Jack Greenberg and Nancy Gertner) and asked them whether they were aware of the honoring of the Libyan; they both said they were not. I urged them both to come to the conference, to give their speeches, but to dissociate themselves publicly from the honoring of a representative of that repressive, anti-Jewish, and terrorist regime. They both came to the conference and gave their speeches. I also circulated a petition among my faculty colleagues calling for public dissociation from the honoring of the Libyan.

These actions on my part led one student organizer of the conference to spread the canard that I had tried to persuade invited guests to stay away from the conference. Several student organizers of the conference also complained to Dean Sacks about me, alleging that I had improperly interfered with a student function. Dean Sacks assures me that he immediately told the students that I was well within my rights, even if I had urged people to stay away. He also told them that he would communicate their complaint to me (as is his policy with all such complaints). In communicating their complaint to me, Sacks reiterated his support of my right to say what I pleased about events such as the Third World conference. I assured him that I would do so, and told him that if there were any repetition of the kind of anti-Jewish and anti-Israel conference that occurred last year, I would surely speak out against it in unequivocal terms.

There was an attempt by the organizers of the Third World Conference to abridge my free speech. There were also attempts to abridge the free speech of the students critical of the anti-Jewish and anti-Israel line taken by several of the speakers (and applauded by a great many others). But neither Dean Sacks nor Dean Young were in any way complicitous in these attempts.

ALAN M. DERSHOWITZ
Harvard Law School
Cambridge, Massachusetts

DANIEL BENSON writes:

My purpose in relating the story of Dean Sacks's meeting with the student organizers was not to claim that the dean agreed with or necessarily acceded to the substance of their complaints. Rather, the point was to show that he failed to repudiate unequivocally the entirely improper attempt by the student organizers to abridge Alan M. Dershowitz's freedom of speech. This failure to object to the attempt itself was fully consistent with the law-school administration's general reaction to the events surrounding the Third World conference. The student organizers themselves made no mention in their reports of the meeting that Dean Sacks had informed them that Mr. Dershowitz had been well within his rights in protesting the honoring of the Libyan. Instead, they viewed his promise to convey their complaints to Mr. Dershowitz as a positive response to their efforts—which, in effect, it was. Dean Sacks's policy of communicating student complaints to professors may be appropriate in some contexts but in this one it was decidedly inappropriate. By acquiescing in the attempt to intimidate Mr. Dershowitz, Dean Sacks supplied additional evidence to the student organizers of the Third World conference that they were not regarded by the law-school administration as responsible for the offensive implications of their own words and actions.

Finally, although Assistant Dean Young can be faulted for his response to other aspects of the conference controversy, I did not state or imply in my article that he was in any way involved in the particular events here under discussion.

Rumkowski in Auschwitz

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Michael Checinski's article, "How Rumkowski Died" [May] and his exchange with Tzipora Hager Halivni [Letters from Readers, September], invite a thorough refutation of most of his recollections. I was imprisoned in Birkenau almost from its very beginning, in early Spring 1942, to its last day in January 1945, and my work and other experiences there spanned the history of the camp, from digging the foundations of the crematoria to clearing the concrete rubble after they were blown up, and all the nightmare in between. These experiences, despite the lapse of years, are still vividly etched in my memory. . . . It was, therefore, with particular dismay that I read Mr. Checinski's account, which, for the most part, is a melange of distortion and crude simplifications. My reaction was one of disbelief that anyone so uninformed would undertake to write about this subject. . . .

First, let me say a few words about Moishe Hussid, who Mr. Checinski says killed both Chaim Rumkowski, head of the Lodz ghetto, and Leon Rosenblatt, chief of police of the Lodz ghetto. I remember Hussid from the day he and a few other Jews from the Lodz ghetto arrived in Birkenau in late 1942, via the prison of Sieradz, near Lodz. He was of better than average size, but by no means massive, and most certainly not gorilla-like, as Mr. Checinski claims. On the contrary, he had regular and rather pleasant features. He and the others received green-triangle designations below their serial numbers, which in the concentration-camp taxonomy denoted that the prisoner had had some sort of criminal association on the outside. It was the mark of many German prisoners but looked odd within the Star of David triangle configuration, which was red and yellow. In the case of these Jewish prisoners, the green substituted for the red.

Throughout 1943 Hussid worked in a number of places inside and outside the immediate camp, including a few days on the same construction site with me. For a time, we were also in the same barracks, No. 14. . . . In early 1944, Hussid was recruited for work in the "Sauna," or disinfection facility,

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where those from the incoming transports designated for work were converted from civilians into prisoners. Between April and November 1944, I too worked in that facility and was on the same twelve-hour shift with him. We sorted clothing after its disinfection and did sundry cleanup chores.

During the night shift there was opportunity for conversation and I remember that Hussid frequently talked about Rosenblatt. That was long before he ever dreamed of meeting him again. He was obsessed by a singular hatred for him —the kind of hatred that only a personal grudge can generate. Rosenblatt, according to Hussid, had been instrumental in his apprehension and delivery to the Germans. It is interesting that at no time did Hussid ever so much as mention Rumkowski. And it is puzzling that neither he nor the others in his group who came from Lodz ever mentioned the incident of the suitcase full of valuables and Hussid's role in it, which Mr. Checinski describes in his article.

Rosenblatt's arrival in August 1944 was no surprise to Hussid, for he had been informed by the earlier arrivals that Rosenblatt would come sooner or later.

On the day of their fateful encounter I was at my post outside the shower room, the outgoing side of the Sauna. The killing of Rosenblatt took place at or near the incoming side of this facility. The two sides could not mingle and the penalty for any infraction was severe. As a result, I did not witness Rosenblatt's murder but heard a great deal about it, since that day and for days thereafter the Sauna was awash with details of this degrading spectacle of one Jew killing another, and, to boot, in the presence, and undoubtedly to the amusement, of Joseph Kraemer, the SS camp commandant. (Kraemer later became chief of the Bergen-Belsen camp and was executed there after the war.) At no time during those days did anyone so much as intimate that Rumkowski shared Rosenblatt's fate.

I heard Hussid himself talk about the event a few days later, and he never mentioned Rumkowski. Mr. Checinski, however, says that "during the torture of Rosenblatt there was an interruption, and Moishe Hussid was seen carrying an old man with a shock of white hair, also unconscious, on his back. It was Rumkowski!" But this could not possibly have occurred, because Rumkowski never made it to the Sauna—he was with the column heading for the gas chamber.

I saw Rumkowski and his family on a small open truck moving slowly alongside the marching column as I looked out of one of the windows in the big room outside the showers. There were other inmates with me and we could see well, for the Sauna building was only slightly recessed from the road which at that point was heavily traversed by those being marched from the railroad siding to the III and IV crematoria complex. This was a daily occurrence and those who worked there watched hundreds of thousands of people en route to the gas chambers.

I recognized Rumkowski by his flowing white mane (a description of him had preceded his arrival). He was a striking sight, and so out-of-place standing there on an open truck while the others in the straggling column marched on. I remember discussing with the other inmates the irony of Rumkowski's special treatment which provided him only with the "benefit" of an earlier arrival in the gas chamber.

At that time and place there was no one who could have diverted anyone in this column, including those on the truck, from his appointment with doom. To think that Hussid could have obtained Rumkowski's release from that moving column so that he could settle a private account with the victim before the gas chamber claimed him, is grotesque. To maintain, as Mr. Checinski does, that Hussid could have fetched Rumkowski's body from the gas chamber and brought it to the Sauna, and then have carried it out for burning in a nonexistent pit behind the Sauna is so unreal that it borders on the phantasmagoric. Without exception, no one, unless he worked there, had access to a gas chamber or crematorium. No one in his right mind would have risked certain death to accomplish what Hussid would have had to do in order to make Mr. Checinski's supposition credible.

It is easy to understand that anyone arriving at Birkenau would be so overwhelmed by its horror as to become confused about just what he was witnessing. Also, that the astounding and terrifying initial impressions could become intermingled with things one was told while in a state of shock and bewilderment, resulting in inaccurate conceptions. However, if one presumes to record the events of history, one has an obligation to validate one's recollections, to verify the details one presents, to determine the nature of circumstances and conditions that provided the context for one's own experiences, and above all to distinguish clearly between fact and speculation.

For example, the place Mr. Checinski identifies as "Canada" is misleading even by the norms of common usage in the camp. What he calls Canada was in fact a small stretch of camp called *"Effektenlager"* (camp of effects or belongings) at the extreme end of the huge complex. It consisted of the disinfection facility (the Sauna), a large brick and concrete building, and two rows of several barracks each across the road from it. . . .

While some prisoners may have referred to the entire *Effektenlager* as Canada because the Canada group (Jewish prisoners who collected goods taken from new arrivals) worked there, absolutely no one would have made the mistake of placing the *Sonderkommandos* there, as Mr. Checinski implicitly does in his article and repeats in his exchange with Mrs. Halivni.

Mr. Checinski says that "the prisoners who lived in Canada . . . served in the disinfection process, *in the gas chambers, removing the bodies*, and so forth. Every half year or so, they were themselves killed and replaced by others" (emphasis added). But only the men of the *Sonderkommando* (crematoria crews) worked in the gas chambers, and there was no interchangeability with other work details or living quarters. The men of the *Sonderkommando* worked, lived, and died in total isolation from the rest of the prisoners. Being conscripted into the *Sonderkommando* was an irrevocable assignment and feared by all prisoners, since it was in reality a death sentence. Of the approximately 3,000 men who slaved there in three successive periods between the late spring of 1942 until the end, only about 40 or 50 survived the war. . . .

By contrast, the majority of the prisoners of the Canada work group, as well as the other groups who worked and lived in the *Effektenlager* in 1944, survived the war; most of them had been in these

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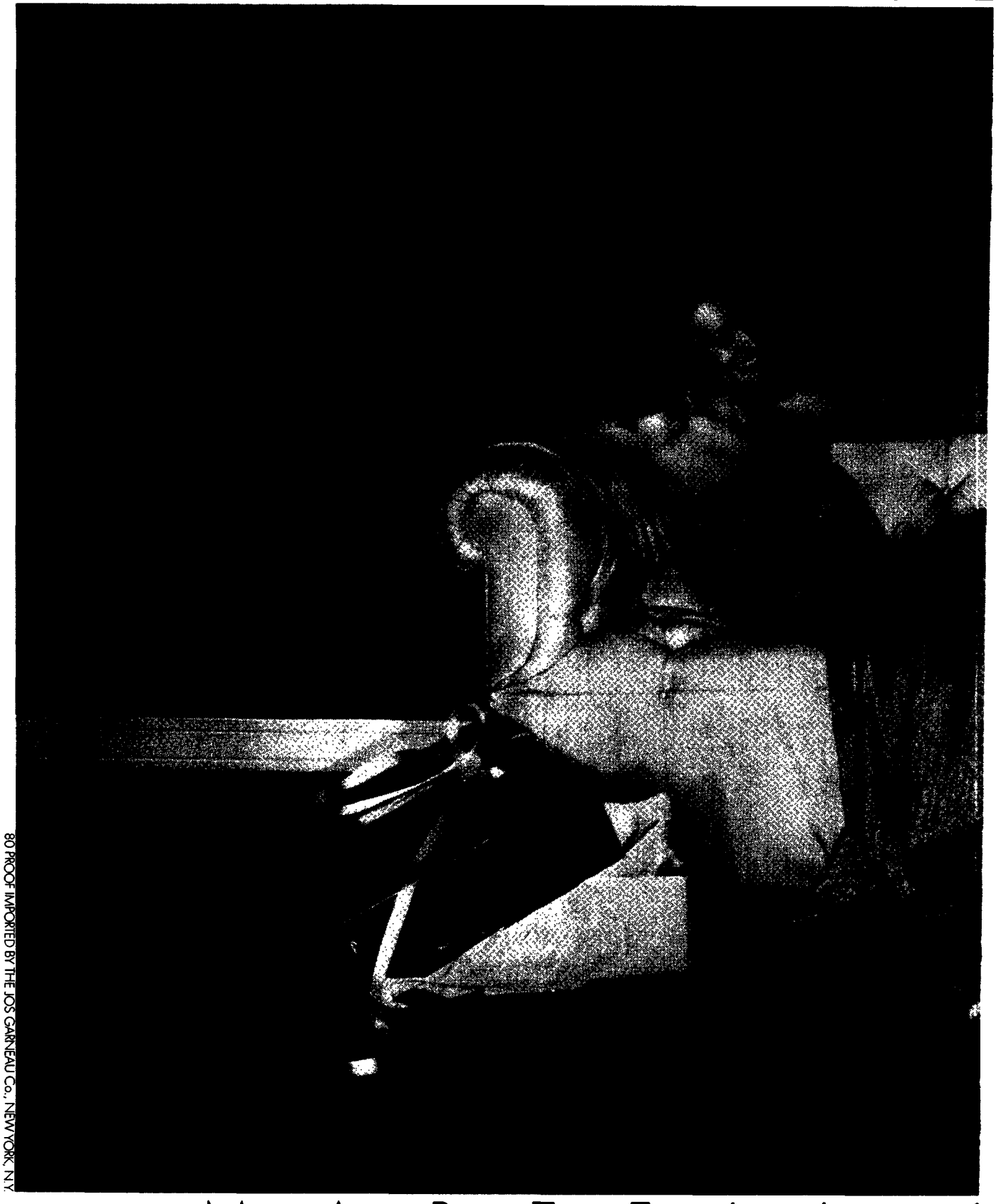

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work units since late 1942 or early 1943. Their high survival rate was primarily due to their access to additional food, albeit clandestinely, and the fact that they worked indoors. Their extra food, however, was not gained at the expense of the other prisoners; only somewhat less food fell into SS hands. Many a prisoner in the camps was helped by the food smuggled in by the Canada workers, at great risk to themselves. I saw people's backs reduced to pulp for these transgressions.

Mr. Checinski states that a few of these men, all of whom he calls "primary German helpers," were able to survive the periodic liquidations by proving their worth to the Germans. He claims this is how Moishe Hussid survived. This high-handed pronouncement is particularly offensive since it is not offered as conjecture but as a statement of fact. However, it is sheer fantasy. Hussid never worked in the *Sonderkommando* and therefore was not in periodic danger of being liquidated on the basis of his work affiliation. The danger that he and all Jewish inmates faced was being selected out to the gas chamber during the frequent selections of the so-called weak and sick-looking. . . . Nor were any "comradely" relationships established in Birkenau between prisoners, especially Jewish ones, and SS men. The fact that Hussid could kill a defenseless man on the premises where he worked does not reflect his position of influence, which was nil, but only the tragedy and degradation that prevailed there; killing was easy and encountered few obstacles; only saving life was a next-to-impossible task.

Hussid's survival was no more or less accidental than the survival of others. There was usually a confluence of circumstances contributing to survival, depending on age, physical and emotional stamina, and other variables. Above all was the chance of work and barracks assignment. Some barracks were slaughterhouses where prisoners had a life expectancy of a few days, while others would give one a chance to live until carried dead from the work site. These circumstances, plus the scourges of typhus and diarrhea, would decimate a barracks of about a thousand inmates to half this number or less within a week. Whereas non-Jews who contracted typhus could report sick and either survive or perish unattended in the sick bay, Jews had to report to sick barracks No. 7, which was used only as a collection point for the gas chamber every Tuesday.

I fail to understand how Mr. Checinski could have arrived at his ideas of how Hussid (and others) survived—they are so simplistic and incredibly at odds with the facts. Above all, he should apologize for slandering the memory of thousands of Jewish men of the Birkenau *Sonderkommando* and hundreds of men and women of the other groups who worked in the *Effektenlager*, many of whom may still be alive, and whom he offhandedly describes as "primary German helpers." It is indefensible so to stigmatize people who were forced, under conditions of indescribable hell, to drag dead bodies from gas chambers to furnace or pit, or even those who were put to work to transport and sort Jewish belongings, or to disinfect arriving prisoners, or give them clothing. . . .

Mr. Checinski tells us, further, that there were two places in Birkenau where Germans disposed of Jewish bodies: the crematoria and a huge pit into which they threw "surplus" Jews for whom there was no room in the gas chambers when the daily transports were too large. He supplements this bit of "history" with the following: "they also threw children, old people, and invalids there, from whom they feared no resistance." This, he alleges, also saved expensive poison gas. The inference to be drawn, of course, is that when the gas chambers were filled up, the surplus victims were thrown alive into the pit. That description bears no resemblance at all to Birkenau's death machine. Nazi crimes in Birkenau were so monstrous that exaggeration and dramatization of events is not only a disservice to history, it is in some unique way obscene. We do not have to embellish our people's collective tragedy with lurid speculations to arouse the world's conscience!

There were five places in Birkenau where Jews were gassed and burned. Four were crematoria: two at each end of the camp complex, each equipped with its own gas chamber and battery of furnaces. The fifth was a large cottage in the . . . woods (in the back of Crematorium IV), which was used as Birkenau's first and sole gas chamber from the spring of 1942 to mid-March 1943 when the first two crematoria were put into operation, followed by two more later in the year. During its year of operation that simple-looking cottage with its adjacent pit was one of Europe's largest extermination centers. It was deactivated, but not destroyed, when the crematoria opened, and put back into operation in late spring 1944 when the destruction of Hungarian Jewry began. It was Eichmann's diligence in Hungary and the eagerness of his Hungarian hosts to accommodate his objectives that brought approximately 10,000 Jews to Birkenau every day for weeks. They discovered then that while the gas chambers had ample capacity to do their job, the furnaces couldn't be speeded up to dispose of the gassed bodies. It was for that reason that the cottage gas chamber and its burning pit were reactivated.

But it is simply not true that people were thrown in alive, nor is it true that the pit was used in order to save the cost of poison gas. In addition to being incorrect, this view is naive, for a can of Zyklon-B gas cost the SS a couple of Reichsmark and was enough to kill as many people as they could squeeze into a gas chamber. Could anyone have devised a more inexpensive way to dispose of a whole nation? Throwing live bodies into a fire is a messy affair and that was not the way the Final Solution was implemented there. And besides, building gas chambers and crematoria was Heydrich's and Himmler's answer to the messy methods of the *Einsatzgruppen* (SS killing commandos) at the Eastern front where Soviet Jews were liquidated by mass executions at open pits. . . .

Mr. Checinski states that on the night of his arrival he and his group were taken to see the pit in order to break their spirits, or at least so he thought. In fact, all of the open-air burning was confined to an area adjacent to the old gas chamber in the woods stretching to the back of Crematorium IV, . . . and was not visible from the Sauna or from anywhere else within the camp.

In the 1942-43 period I worked on construction sites in the surrounding areas, sometimes very close to the woods, yet I never saw a pit or flames shooting from it. In fact, it took weeks and weeks before we discovered that there was

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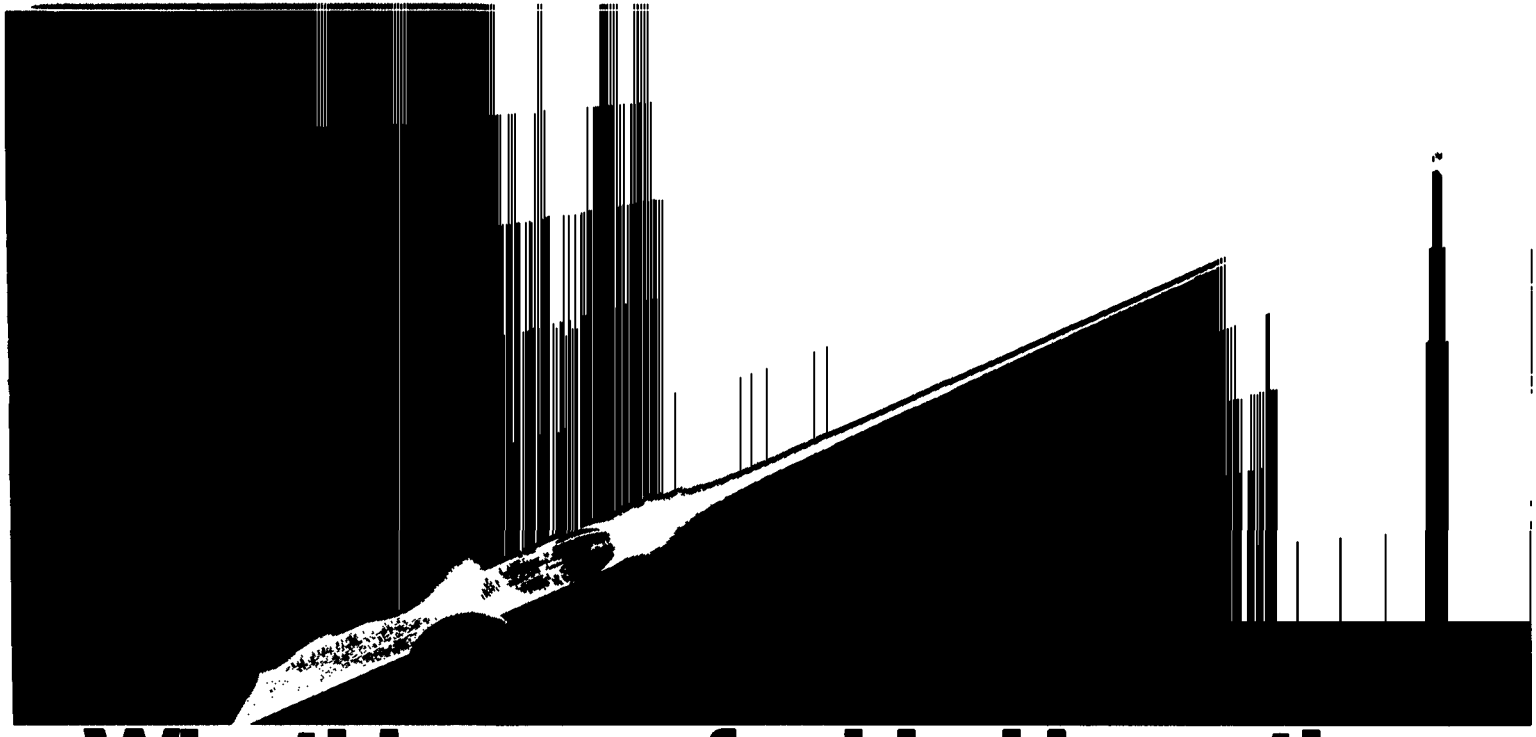

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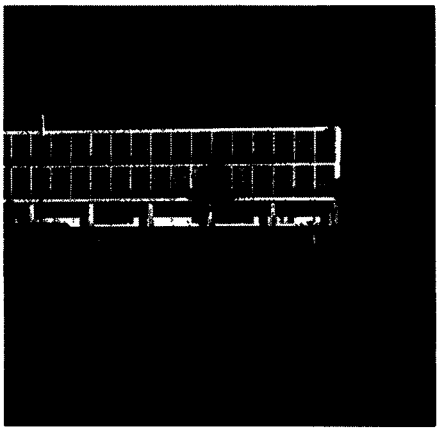

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killing by gas going on there, and only because we were told.

It wasn't until the crematoria were opened that smoke and flames belching from their chimneys became the hallmark of Birkenau. They could be seen from every corner of the camp and at night could be seen for miles. I surmise that someone that evening may have pointed out the direction of the pit to the newly arrived people, and that those flames of hell that Mr. Checinski describes as having come from the pit were in reality the flames from the crematoria stacks, visible to all.

The gas chambers and burning facilities of Birkenau were totally restricted areas and self-contained worlds of destruction. The SS had no need of burning pits placed helter skelter throughout nearby camp areas, for this would have defeated their scheme of keeping things as secret as possible. The Sauna had no pit for burning clothes or anything else. Every article of clothing was disinfected and reused for prisoners in Birkenau and satellite camps.

I worked the night shift in the Sauna every second week for seven months and in the silence of night I did hear screams of thousands of people coming from the cottage gas chamber in the woods, followed by sudden stillness as the Zyklon-B took effect. This went on night after night, but I never saw what Mr. Checinski describes.

A few more points, which may be indicative of the effect of time on Mr. Checinski's recollections:

1. A German in civilian clothes could not have tapped Hussid on the shoulder to say *"Moishe, genug."* The only Germans there, except for a few prisoners, were uniformed members of the SS, none of whom was ever comradely with prisoners or would address one by name.

2. The disinfection fluid applied to people's skin was not benzol but a mixture of lysol and water. I saw it mixed.

3. No one working in the Sauna at that time had a need to wear, or wore, wooden shoes. In the early days of Birkenau, wooden shoes had caused many to die because they produced blisters which became infected and resulted in selection to the gas chamber. I remember Moishe Hussid wearing leather boots at all times. The Sauna floors were not wet. Even the shower room was free of slush, for it had wooden slats on the floor. . . .

Among the inmates working in the Sauna (as well as among those in Mr. Checinski's transport), there were many who either witnessed the death of Rosenblatt, or saw Rumkowski on his way to the crematorium. I know for a fact that most of the Sauna inmates survived the war and probably many among them are still alive. I fail to see, therefore, why Mr. Checinski believes himself to be the sole surviving witness to what happened that day. If the truth is to be established, then the voices of other witnesses must be heard. . . .

PHILIP GOLDSTEIN
Chevy Chase, Maryland

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The main objection to Michael Checinski's article I raised in my letter [September] was that Mr. Checinski's account of the death of Rumkowski conflicted with that of Dov Paisicovic, a survivor of the *Sonderkommando*. Originally, Mr. Checinski wrote that Moishe Hussid "killed Rumkowski" and boasted, "Now I have finished with the two of them," referring to Rumkowski and Rosenblatt. In his reply he qualifies this by saying that he "did not witness" the killing of Rumkowski, but he reaffirms that he saw Hussid carrying the unconscious body of Rumkowski through the Sauna and out to the pit. According to Paisicovic, however, he and his colleagues killed Rumkowski in Crematorium II. In his reply, Mr. Checinski says that "the two accounts rather complement each other" and that he is "quite prepared to believe that it was Dov Paisicovic and his colleagues who tortured [Rumkowski] to death" and that "it is also quite possible that Moishe Hussid was one of those who participated." The logistics of Auschwitz, however, make it clear that this could not possibly have been the case. The Sauna was separated from the crematoria by electrified barbed wire. Upon the arrival of a transport, it was swarming with SS guards. Passage in and out was limited to official business and carefully checked. The men of the *Sonderkommando* even slept inside the crematoria, where SS men were stationed around the clock and prisoner-guards monitored the gates. The *Sonderkommandos* could go from Crematorium I and II to Crematorium III and IV, via the

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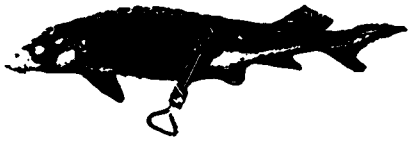

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Sauna, only with an SS escort. Therefore, if Hussid was seen in the Sauna carrying Rumkowski, he could not have brought him from the crematorium. Mr. Checinski's speculation that "it is entirely possible that he [Hussid] was part of a different *Sonderkommando* and just came into the Sauna area" ignores the confinement of the *Sonderkommando.*

Mr. Checinski further states that "not only the disinfection bloc . . . but the whole area of Birkenau where the *Sonderkommandos* worked was called Canada *by the prisoners.*" But contrary to his claim, eyewitnesses unanimously designate only the area where the plundered goods were stored as Canada. This area, which consisted of thirty barracks, aligned with the Sauna between Crematoria I and II and III and IV, was not only cordoned off, but also served to divide the *Sonderkommandos;* the Nazis suspected them of rebelliousness, and thus kept the different *Sonderkommando* groups separate. Not even the belongings collected in the crematoria were transported to Canada by inmates; the SS did this themselves. . . .

In the article, Mr. Checinski claims that Hussid took Rumkowski to a "huge open pit in which fires permanently blazed twenty-four hours a day. Into this pit were thrown 'surplus' Jews, for whom there was no room in the gas chambers when daily transport was too large." In my letter I noted that a man from the Sauna would not have had access to the pit. In his reply, Mr. Checinski now says that there was "one [pit] by the Sauna, mainly for burning clothing . . . people, also, were thrown into [it]," and that Hussid took Rumkowski in the direction of this pit. But the new version is also implausible. The SS did not burn clothing. The better articles they shipped to the Reich to be distributed to needy German families; the inferior articles they handed out to the prisoners. They mainly burned such "useless" objects as documents, diplomas, military decorations, passports, marriage certificates, prayerbooks, holy objects, Bibles, photographs, and even foodstuffs. These were incinerated in the courtyard of Crematorium II, in piles, not in a pit, as Mr. Checinski claims. Cremating bodies was an entirely more complicated process which entailed stoking wood pyres, continually drenching the corpses in methanol, and sifting through the ashes for valuables. . . . It could not have occurred in conjunction with burning refuse. Moreover, the cremation of cadavers near the Sauna would have exposed the extermination program to prisoner-workers and to new arrivals, which was a violation of the Nazi rules of secrecy.

In my letter I also objected to Mr. Checinski's claim that the SS "took us to see the pit, in order to break our spirit," meaning the pit for "surplus" Jews. In his reply, he modifies his claim, and now says: "we were not taken right up close to the pit; at night it could be seen from quite a distance." In the spring of 1944, among others, five pits were dug next to Crematorium IV, in preparation for the mass arrivals from Hungary. The flames, though concealed by trees and brush, were undoubtedly visible to people in the immediate vicinity. If Mr. Checinski happened to be on the road nearby, at night, and the pits were aflame, he might have seen them. Two questions, however, remain unanswered. First, why did the SS take the group along the road at night after they had been processed in the Sauna earlier in the day? Second, did the air defense permit outdoor fires on August 31, the date Mr. Checinski arrived in Birkenau? On August 25, the Germans had spotted an Allied reconnaisance flight over Auschwitz (reported in the New York *Times,* February 24, 1979) and sounded the alarm. Did they resume night burning only six days later? In any event, a survivor of the *Sonderkommando,* Filip Müller, reports that the night work consisted mostly of removing the ashes, cleaning the gas chambers, and setting up the pyres.

In his reply, Mr. Checinski also says that he is "by no means the only survivor 'to see the pit'" and cites as evidence Raul Hilberg's *The Destruction of the European Jews.* Hilberg, however, merely states that "survivors report that children were sometimes tossed alive into that inferno." Hilberg's sources are the historian Philip Friedman and the survivors Gisela Perl (a physician) and Olga Leng-

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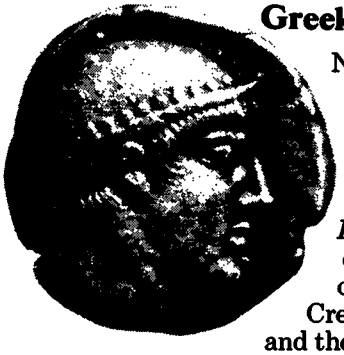

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yel (a nurse). They were my "neighbors" in Auschwitz; Perl and Lengyel worked in barracks 15, I lived in barracks 16. But they did not actually see the burning pit. The information about the children was passed on by the *Sonderkommandos* so that Dr. Perl could abort pregnancies and even suffocate the newborn to save them from the burning pit (in doing this, she was also able to save the mothers from the gas chambers).

But knowing what was happening is a far cry from actually visiting the pits. And even among prisoners, the knowledge of what was being done to the infants was spotty. After the war, some prisoners, who had worked in the Sauna, only 400 meters from the pits (not 30-40 as Mr. Checinski states) told me that they had been unaware of the burning of live victims. This is further evidence of the isolation of the killing centers and their crews from the disinfection bloc. . . .

From his article, I had understood that the dais Mr. Checinski described, from which he claims Rumkowski and his entourage overlooked the marching Jews, was the ramp on which the selections for the gas chambers were made. In his reply, Mr. Checinski now says he saw the dais after a 5-10 minute march "*beyond* the ramp." But after a 5-10 minute march, Mr. Checinski would have been on the thoroughfare leading to the Sauna, between the men's and women's camps. As an inmate, I myself saw arrivals from Lodz there on their way to the Sauna. This road was flanked on both sides by ditches (about two or three feet wide) and was bordered by electrified barbed wire; it was just wide enough for the five-deep column of prisoners and their SS escorts—there was no room for a dais. I traversed the east-west bend of the road on the 26 and 27 of August (I mention these circumstances in "The Birkenau Revolt," *Jewish Social Studies,* Vol. XLI, Number 2) and the north-south section on about August 30, the day before Mr. Checinski passed it. Yet I observed no dais. It seems that Mr. Checinski's imagination transformed the motor vehicle which transported Rumkowski to the crematorium (according to Paisicovic and a Sauna employee) into a platform.

I also questioned Mr. Checinski's account of Hussid wearing wooden clogs in the Sauna. Mr. Checinski replies that "the *Sonderkommando* [meaning those who worked in the Sauna] had 'the choicest of leather shoes,' taken from the prisoners, but they weren't foolish enough to wear them in the Sauna, where the floor was full of water." But workers in the Sauna had no need to save shoes or clothing; they could help themselves to as much as they wanted. Moreover, 80 per cent of the Sauna area was dry. It consisted of a sizable undressing room, with a spotless floor on which arrivals dropped their newly acquired Reich clothes; an equally sizable hallway that contained disinfection drums and served as passageway; a barber shop; an examination room; a shower room; prisoner clothing stores; a dressing room. The working centers were dry.

Other memoirs by survivors seem to confirm Paisicovic's claim that members of the underground killed Rumkowski. In fact, it would appear that the killing of Rumkowski was part of a pattern of organized vengeance against ghetto leaders. The prisoners also killed Moishe Merin, chairman of the *Judenrat* in Sosnowiec, for having betrayed his people. A veteran inmate boasted to a group from Sosnowiec and neighboring towns: "Not long ago we had your king, Moniak Merin. He did not survive long. He flew to heaven, exactly like the Lodz king, Rumkowski. Such [men] soon become a head lower here. Kings they could be to you, but not here. They were shown what it means to be a Jewish king under the Germans" (H. Perlmutter, *An Aktion in Auschwitz,* Tel Aviv).

The murder of Rosenblatt, corroborated by a second eyewitness, may also be part of this pattern. The simultaneous killing of Rosenblatt and Rumkowski in two separate areas suggests a joint conspiracy. Joint *Sonderkommando* and Sauna plotting is confirmed in the reliable report of Salmen Lewental ("Notes," *Megillah Auschwitz,* edited by Ber Mark, Tel Aviv). The two groups communicated in a limited way through the common electrified wire fence between Crematorium IV and the Sauna and via liaison men who, by virtue of special posts and bribes, moved around.

The fact that Hussid had a personal axe to grind and was an alumnus of the underworld might have made him a likely candidate for the job of killing Rosenblatt. Lewental emphasizes the selection of daring men for special assignment. Mr. Checinski describes Hussid as both a criminal and a man who loved his people and relates how, in Lodz, Hussid had turned himself in to the Nazis as the thief who had stolen a suitcase full of valuables, in order to spare the lives of the 100 Jews the Nazis were threatening to kill. Even if Mr. Checinski's report exaggerates Hussid's nobility, his account of what happened in the Sauna—Hussid handed Rosenblatt a razor and said, " 'You had so much courage when it came to killing thousands and thousands of Jews. Now, please have the courage to kill yourself' "—is consonant with the feelings of members of the underground, who were incensed by the Jews' role in the deportations. The butchery of Rosenblatt, underworld-style, allegedly occurred only after Rosenblatt refused to take his own life.

Another memoir, purportedly by Leib Langfus, a member of the *Sonderkommando,* indicates that the Birkenau underground was preparing a similar fate for the leaders of the Hungarian Jewish community. In his memoir, Langfus speaks of leaders who paralyzed resistance by calming the people and then ransomed their own lives, leaving their flock bereft. (The negotiator of the ransom plan for the Jews of Hungary, Israel Kasztner, was indeed avenged for his betrayal in Israel in 1957, when Zeev Eckstein, a member of Herut, killed him.)

The reader may well be perplexed over the role of the *Sonderkommandos.* On the one hand, they were involved in cremating corpses; on the other, they acted as Jewish judges. Contradiction was inherent in their lives. We must remember that they were selected at random on the basis of physical strength alone (as opposed to the Kapos, who were selected because of their vileness). Thus in a group of about 1,000 men there were some truly noble people. Unless they elected suicide, they had no choice but to do their job. Yet inwardly they were volcanoes burning to rectify evil. The weakest link in the chain of evil, the Jewish ghetto functionaries, were their first target, but the SS followed.

In conclusion, although Mr. Checinski's and Dov Paisicovic's versions agree that prisoners in Birkenau killed Rumkowski, the differences in the accounts are actually irreconcilable. The place

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of execution in one version was, of necessity, the Sauna area; in the other, the place of execution was Crematorium II. In choosing between the two versions, we are not faced with two equally credible accounts. Mr. Checinski's is burdened with inauthentic detail. I apologize to Mr. Checinski for impugning his account, but I deem it my duty to correlate his report with those of other eyewitnesses and in that way to ascertain the facts.

TZIPORA HAGER HALIVNI
New York City

MICHAEL CHECINSKI writes:

We now have *three* contradictory accounts concerning the death of Rumkowski in Auschwitz: the Paisicovic account related by Tzipora Hager Halivni, which places his murder in Crematorium II; Philip Goldstein's account, which places his gassing in Crematorium III or IV; and my account of seeing Rumkowski's body carried through the Sauna, which separated the two crematoria and which was separated from them by electrified barbed-wire fences. Not only do the first two accounts contradict mine—they contradict each other. How fruitful it would be if we could sit down together and really discuss the problems inherent in these conflicting memories, rather than engage in polemics via the pages of COMMENTARY. However, given this format, I will answer my critics to the best of my ability, and hope that in the future we can meet personally.

Mr. Goldstein accuses me of lacking the qualifications for writing my eyewitness account of what I saw in Auschwitz relating to the deaths of Rosenblatt and Rumkowski. At the risk of sounding patronizing, I must point out the difference between an eyewitness and a historian. The former provides the raw material out of which the latter must try to make sense. Therefore, the only qualifications, as I see it, are a sound mind, a clear memory, and lack of ulterior motive—all of which I can claim. I have never claimed to be a historian of the Holocaust, an expert on Auschwitz, or on anything but *my own experience,* which I related as honestly as is humanly possible.

I am happy that my article has brought forth another eyewitness, Mr. Goldstein, who, despite his vitriol, confirms 95 per cent of my story. I hope that there are more

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yet to come. Only in this way can the whole picture be pieced together. I am only puzzled by the rage which informs these criticisms. One can talk about wooden shoes versus leather shoes, the location of pits, lysol instead of benzol, etc., without resorting to insult. I sense that the animus lies elsewhere, and has nothing at all to do with the death of Rumkowski. The basic thrust behind the letters of Mrs. Halivni and Mr. Goldstein is a defense or exoneration of the *Sonderkommandos* and Canada workers, whom they *mistakenly* think I maligned in my story about Moishe Hussid. I think anybody reading the story without bias would recognize that it is absolutely neutral on this point. I have never presumed to judge these unfortunate people.

I am sorry if my phrase "primary helpers of the Germans" was taken by anyone to have a moral or political connotation. I meant helpers only in the mechanical sense of the word: they were cogs in the machine, and very important cogs.

I will leave my refutation of the details for later and go straight to the jugular of Mr. Goldstein's only substantive dispute which has any bearing on the validity of my account, namely, his claim of seeing Rumkowski and his family riding past on a small truck toward Crematoria III and IV, on a path from which "no one could have diverted him." How then, if Paisicovic's account is correct, did he get to Crematorium II? Mr. Goldstein admits that he had never seen Rumkowski before, but he recognized him from a description preceding his arrival. I, on the other hand, lived for four and a half years in the Lodz ghetto, and saw Rumkowski at least once a month at close range. On two occasions, when I led successful strikes at my metal factory, I was personally beaten by Chaim Rumkowski. Therefore, I would pit my recognition of the man against anyone's. Further, Mr. Goldstein agrees that Moishe Hussid killed Rosenblatt. Why, then, did Moishe Hussid specifically say he had finished with the *two* of them, and even refer to one of them as *"Der Alte"*? I have never been known to suffer from visual or aural hallucinations, and there was only one Elder.

It is not my task or my problem to explain how Rumkowski got from Place X to Place Y. I never said, as Mr. Goldstein asserts, that "Hussid fetched Rumkowski's body from the gas chamber, . . . etc." I am not sure that Rumkowski ever got as far as the gas chamber. I deeply regret that Mr. Goldstein didn't publish his testimony some years earlier, when Moishe Hussid, our most important witness, was still alive.

Mr. Goldstein claims that there was no pit near the Sauna. Mrs. Halivni, on the other hand, says there was one 400 meters away. I don't want to quibble over the semantics of the word "near." I could only estimate the distance by the amount of time Moishe Hussid disappeared from the Sauna carrying the bodies. I could be wrong, of course, but it seemed to me to be about 10-15 minutes. Obviously I had other things on my mind at the time, as I was being shaven of all my hair. The reason I think he went to the pit with the bodies is that when he returned, he used the words *"loch mit dem fyer"* ["fiery hole"] in boasting to his co-workers about his deed. I remember wondering what in the world he was referring to, because it wasn't until later in the evening, when the Kapos were running us around the camp (don't ask me why), that I saw the fiery pit, which I described in my article, and made the connection. I cannot quote Moishe Hussid verbatim, but his words were to the effect, *"Ich hob im arayngevorfn in dem loch mit dem fyer"*["I've thrown him into the fiery hole"]. Let me ask Mr. Goldstein and Mrs. Halivni: *what could Moishe Hussid have done with the bodies,* if not what he said he did?

If I had known that I would be so sharply cross-examined on this point, I would have included it in my article. But it never occurred to me that there was anything here to challenge.

Now I would like to respond to Mr. Goldstein's other attacks, for although they are not directly relevant to the fate of Rumkowski, they may affect the reader's judgment as to my credibility.

1. Obviously, to his friend, who saw him regularly for four years, Moishe Hussid seemed a nice looking man and not at all gorilla-like. I happened to see him once, at a time when his entire visage was transformed by the ecstasy of the violent revenge in which he was engaging. I had to tone down my description of the torture of Rosenblatt, it was so horrible, but I must add here that Moishe Hussid was positively beastlike at that time. Something un-normal, inhuman. Also, he may not have looked so big to the relatively well-fed Canada men, but to us, skeletal bags of bones, with stunted growth from four years of food deprivation, anyone with muscles and flesh looked monstrous. I stand by my description, which, again, was not a value judgment.

2. Mr. Goldstein questions the suitcase affair, because Moishe Hussid never told him about it. But does he offer any other explanation as to why Moishe Hussid was sent to Auschwitz in 1942, when only a few isolated individuals were deported from the Lodz ghetto before the summer of 1944?.

3. I don't know who the German was who interrupted Moishe Hussid. Mr. Goldstein says that Joseph Kraemer was present. I would be glad to compare a description of the man I saw with any survivors who remember what the man looked like; I am sure that the man was wearing civilian clothes. Such details one does not forget or invent.

4. Mr. Goldstein will probably be hurt to know that rank-and-file prisoners did not always differentiate between the *Sonderkommandos* and the Canada group. Many did not live long enough to learn the fine distinctions, and many, such as myself, were soon transferred to other sections of Auschwitz. What *was* clear to us was that some prisoners were privileged and most of us were not. We often referred to any of the "helpers" (for want of a better word) as *"Sonderkommandos."* This may astonish Mr. Goldstein, but my reality was as real as his. It's not always pleasant to see ourselves as others see us.

5. I said that Moishe Hussid *probably* survived because of his usefulness to the Germans. This was offered as conjecture, not fact, as Mr. Goldstein asserts. It may be *wrong,* but was not meant to be offensive. However, I apologize to anyone who was offended.

6. When I said that there were two places where the Germans disposed of bodies, I was using "two" in the generic sense (i.e., two types of places), to distinguish the pits from the crematoria. As Mr. Goldstein taunts my "bit of history," I will quote further from Raul Hilberg, p. 629; "Gradually Auschwitz too shifted to pits. By 1944, the transports exceeded the crematoriums' capacity . . . eight pits

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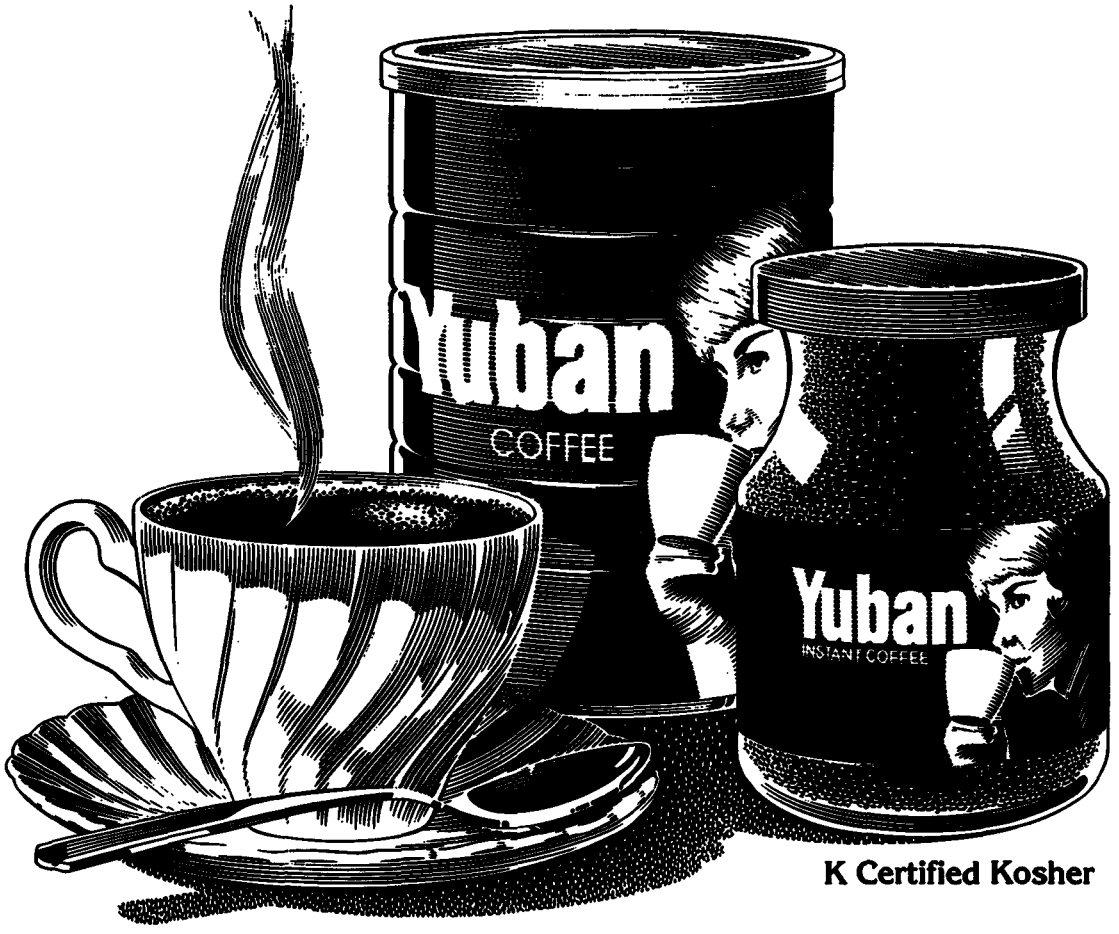

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were dug, each about 4 x 60 yards in size. . . . Survivors report that children were sometimes tossed alive into the inferno . . . the pits were found to be the cheapest and most efficient method of body disposal. In August 1944, when over 20,000 corpses had to be burned on some days, the open pits broke the bottleneck." And for Mrs. Halivni, for whom Hilberg is not sufficient evidence, I will quote from a recent article in *Polish Perspectives* (No. 7/8, pp. 12-13) the following eyewitness account: ". . . I saw several times the Germans transporting children in trucks from the railway station to Birkenau. The trucks then approached the pits with fires burning and the children were shot down like potatoes. I saw some older ones hang on to the platform but the SS men threw them into the pit themselves. I do not know where those children were from, nor what their nationality was . . ." (GKBZH, Records I Ds 221/46, Vol. III).

7. The pit which I saw was, indeed, through a small woods, so Mr. Goldstein's description coincides with my recollection. He is simply wrong when he says it was not visible from anywhere in the camp. How then did I see it? I saw the crematoria also, and was not so naive or stupid as to confuse the two.

8. Mr. Goldstein states, "I remember Moishe Hussid wearing leather boots at all times." However, he admits he did not witness the torture of Rosenblatt. I did, and I state unequivocally that Moishe Hussid was wearing wooden shoes at that time. Maybe (and this is speculation on my part) he put them on specifically for the purpose of the torture. They certainly increased the effectiveness of the stomping. And for Mrs. Halivni who insists that 80 per cent of the floor of the Sauna was dry, I will recall that Moishe Hussid spent considerable time torturing Rosenblatt in the shower itself.

9. My only reason for thinking that I was the sole surviving witness to this story is that no one else has come forth with an account after almost thirty-five years. I welcome other witnesses with all my heart. As for the effect of time on my memory, I would like to emphasize that I submitted my testimony about Rosenblatt and Rumkowski about twenty years ago to Dr. Shmuel Krakowski, now director of the Archives Department of Yad Vashem, in Jerusalem. When I visited Israel this summer, I asked Dr. Krakowski to check if my original testimony corresponds exactly to what I wrote in COMMENTARY from memory alone. Dr. Krakowski confirmed that it is the same account in full. Of course I approve of the efforts of Mrs. Halivni and Mr. Goldstein to correct my eyewitness account. I hope that this effort has brought to light additional facts which may be productive for historians of the Holocaust.

Turning now to the interesting letter of Mrs. Halivni, I must say that I cannot explain with certainty how Moishe Hussid got past or around an electrified barbed-wire fence. However, to answer a question with a question: what did he do with the bodies (putting aside for the moment the question of whose bodies they were)? And why would he have said the words I have already quoted him as saying? Further, how was it possible that Moishe Hussid was so free on this day that he could take the time—maybe one or two hours—to torture Rosenblatt when he was supposed to be working? Were the Germans so tolerant of the Sauna workers? Could it be that he acted with the implicit or explicit approval of the SS? If, as Mr. Goldstein says, Joseph Kraemer was present and enjoying the spectacle it does not seem to me that it would have been impossible for Moishe Hussid to go past the SS guards.

I fully respect Mrs. Halivni's testimony that on "about August 30" she observed no dais in the vicinity I described. However, I also respect my own testimony that on August 31 there was a specially built dais, with steps (probably three or four), and Rumkowski, Rosenblatt, and some of their family members sat on it, facing us as we marched by like tragic soldiers in a farcical parade. To the end of my life I will not forget this picture.

Perhaps Mrs. Halivni is correct that no clothing was burned in the pits; but I, standing before the Sauna, was informed differently. I can only state that there were a lot of rags which the poor people brought with them on their last journey in life which I doubt even the Germans could have found anything to do with.

Finally, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Susan Jo Gardos for her assistance in preparing my replies.

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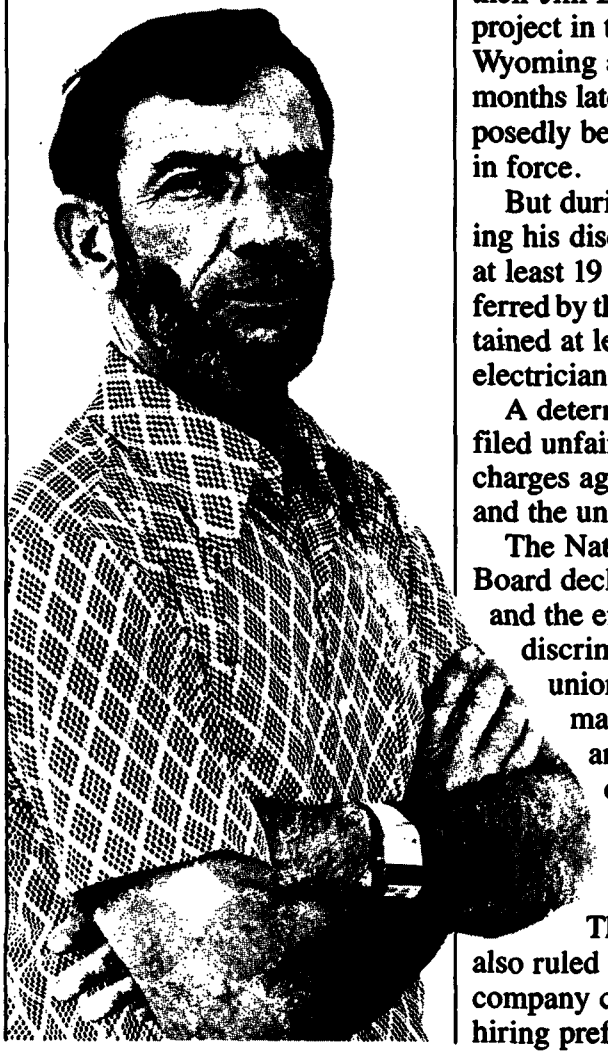

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Kennedy's Foreign Policy: What the Record Shows

Joshua Muravchik

SENATOR Edward M. Kennedy has begun his long and eagerly awaited campaign for the Presidency. He is offering himself to the nation as someone who can provide the leadership which many Americans will agree is needed. Yet if President Carter is as unpopular as Kennedy hopes he is, then the electorate may be wary in 1980 of candidates who stress their personal characteristics more than their views on issues—for that is largely how Jimmy Carter won the Presidency in 1976. Senator Kennedy's views on several domestic issues, especially national health insurance, are rather well known. Now that he is a candidate for national office, the electorate will want to know more about his views on foreign policy.

Senator Kennedy does not serve on either the Foreign Relations Committee or the Armed Services Committee, and as a result, he is less readily identified with particular questions of foreign policy than such Senators as Church, McGovern, Jackson, or Nunn. Nonetheless, Kennedy has taken an active interest in foreign and defense policy and has established a long record and some well-formulated positions in these areas. For about twelve of his seventeen years in the Senate, he has chaired the Subcommittee on Refugees and Escapees, which has given him a senatorial "handle" on foreign policy. He has written one book devoted largely to foreign policy and has inspired, and written an introduction to, another book on defense policy.* He has contributed numerous articles to journals like *Foreign Policy*, *Foreign Affairs*, the *American Journal of International Law*, the *Nation*, *Saturday Review*, *Policy Review*, and others. Each year, he introduces numerous bills and amendments and sends out dozens of press releases on foreign policy. Few, if any, Senators who do not serve on either of the two principal committees concerned with international affairs have exercised anywhere near as much leadership on foreign policy as has Kennedy—a fact that lends credence to his major campaign theme.

Kennedy, for example, was so conspicuous in the fight against the ABM in 1969 that his senatorial collaborators urged him (according to a report in *Newsweek*) to take a lower profile lest the appearance of a Kennedy versus Nixon confrontation cost them votes. Kennedy also led the fight against continued production of the Minuteman III missile, our most modern deployed ICBM. He was one of the leaders in the effort to block development of the neutron bomb. And he has for years been the Senate's leading advocate of a "comprehensive [nuclear] test ban."

After the Vladivostok agreement limiting strategic arms was signed in 1974, Kennedy quickly introduced a bill, together with Senators Mathias and Mondale, which endorsed the agreement but sought to steer the United States away from building as large a nuclear force as the two sides were permitted under its terms. A key purpose of the Kennedy bill was to block Senator Jackson from once again dominating the SALT debate as he had in connection with the Senate's ratification of SALT I in 1972.

In 1975, Kennedy was one of a group of four Senators (the others were Clark, Tunney, and Cranston) whose efforts succeeded in cutting off all U.S. aid to the FNLA and UNITA forces in Angola; then Kennedy took the lead in urging U.S. diplomatic recognition of the Cuban-backed Marxist government of Agostinho Neto even while the Angolan civil war was still raging. He has been in the forefront of the drives for normalization of relations with China, Cuba, and Vietnam as well. Kennedy also teamed up with Senator Culver in exposing the "secret" agreement between the United States and Great Britain which led to the establishment of a U.S. base at Diego Garcia in response to the increased Soviet naval presence in the Indian Ocean.

Perhaps most important, Kennedy has become the Senate's leader in the campaign to enforce an uncompromising human-rights standard on governments friendly to the U.S. Indeed, it is a former Kennedy foreign-policy aide who now, as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Human

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* *Decisions for a Decade*, preface by George F. Kennan (Doubleday, 1968), and *ABM: An Evaluation*, edited by Abram Chayes and Jerome B. Wiesner (Harper & Row, 1969).

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Rights, has largely shaped the Carter administration's policy.

All this inspired the *Nation* magazine, in an unusual editorial shortly after the 1976 election, to urge President-elect Carter to appoint Kennedy as his Secretary of State. The *Nation*'s enthusiastic summary provides a good sketch of Kennedy's activity:

> Senator Kennedy, even though he has never been a member of the Foreign Relations Committee, has managed to take stands and support policies that are generally on the good side of issues connected with America's activities abroad. His work on the Subcommittee on Refugees has made him the leader of the congressional forces that resist dictatorial oppression in "friendly" regimes like that of Chile. His record on matters of arms control and nuclear proliferation is outstanding. He has consistently opposed the unhealthy growth of our arms industry and the unchecked sale of its products abroad. . . . On human rights . . . no record in the Senate is better than his.

II

In an opening shot in the battle for the 1980 Democratic presidential nomination, President Carter noted that one area of disagreement between himself and Kennedy is that "I would be in favor of much stronger defense commitments." A Kennedy spokesman was reported to have replied that "he did not understand what the President was talking about" in light of the fact that Kennedy had recently voted for the 3 per-cent increase in defense spending requested by the administration. Carter's description of the difference between himself and Kennedy may have sounded somewhat ironic to those, like Senators Nunn and Hollings, whose efforts to secure a 5 per-cent increase in U.S. defense spending have been resisted by the administration, but the President's words were still essentially accurate. If Jimmy Carter stands a bit to the liberal or dovish side of what some recent congressional actions and polling data suggest is a toughening national mood on foreign and defense policy, Edward Kennedy's record goes decidedly further in the same direction.

Although Kennedy finally did join Carter this September in supporting the 3 per-cent increase, he had taken a different stand on the 1980 budget earlier in the year. In January, Kennedy attacked Carter's 1980 budget proposal for excessive defense spending, although that proposal provided $4 billion less for defense than the 3 per-cent increase ultimately allowed. And when, in April, Senator Muskie's Budget Committee proposed a defense level slightly below Carter's initial proposal, Kennedy voted for the "transfer amendment" offered by Senator McGovern which would have taken yet another $1.7 billion from the lower defense level proposed by the Budget Committee and shifted it to domestic social spending. Similarly, in May, when the Senate approved the administration's request for a $2.1 billion "supplemental" defense authorization for the tail end of Fiscal 1979, Kennedy was one of twelve Senators who voted against it.

An important disagreement on defense is Kennedy's opposition to the MX, a planned new ICBM which the Carter administration proposes as a partial remedy for the growing vulnerability of our land-based missiles to a Soviet strike. In a statement distributed by his office in May of this year, Kennedy said: "The MX will not buy the United States more security. It will buy less: it will only accelerate the nuclear arms race." Kennedy has also publicized his "serious misgivings" about the U.S. cruise missile, a weapon on which the Carter administration placed great importance in connection with its decision to cancel deployment of the B-1 bomber. Kennedy supported the B-1 cancellation, a step which he had long advocated, although his position differed slightly from Carter's. Carter, while cancelling B-1 deployment, still supported the funding of further experimental work on the aircraft, whereas Kennedy voted in favor of an unsuccessful Senate motion to terminate the system entirely.

Two other issues on which Kennedy has differed to some degree from Carter are relations with China and the Panama Canal. On the latter, Carter accepted, and Kennedy opposed, the highly publicized "DeConcini reservation," which allows the U.S. to use force to open the Canal if it should be closed. With respect to China, while applauding Carter for establishing diplomatic relations with the mainland, Kennedy chided him for having given Taiwan the courtesy of a formal termination of our defense treaty, which requires one year's advance notification. One result of the President's scrupulousness has been a lawsuit brought by Senator Goldwater challenging the President's authority to withdraw the nation from a treaty without the advice and consent of the Senate. "The President might have avoided the constitutional question," said Kennedy, "by simply exercising his unchallenged prerogative to recognize the People's Republic as the government of China and to establish diplomatic relations with it." This would have made it possible, Kennedy went on to explain, for Peking to have declared null our treaty with Taiwan.

Another issue on which Carter and Kennedy have differed is aid to Turkey. Earlier this year, Carter won Senate support for converting $50 million in U.S. military credit into an outright grant to Turkey as a step toward healing strained American-Turkish relations. Kennedy "strongly opposed" the move. Kennedy has also criticized Carter for not having normalized relations with

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Vietnam and for not cracking down hard enough on Chile, Argentina, and other right-wing allies of the U.S. Columnist Henry Brandon, in a recent enthusiastic outline of Kennedy's foreign policy, explained the difference on human-rights policy in these terms; Kennedy "was as outspoken about human-rights violations in South Korea, Brazil, and Chile as President Carter, but in relations with the Soviet Union, he handled the problem of dissenters and Jewish emigration with more circumspection—and more in human than in ideological terms."

On all these issues, Kennedy's positions may be said to have been to the "liberal," "Left," or "dovish" side of Carter's. The one other foreign-policy issue which has divided the two men does not readily lend itself to any such scale: Carter's 1978 decision to sell advanced military aircraft to Egypt, Israel, and Saudi Arabia, which Kennedy voted to block.

III

While the comparison of Kennedy's and Carter's recent stands has a certain obvious political interest, it provides only a very limited picture of Kennedy's perspective on foreign policy. Kennedy was elected to the Senate in 1962 (the year Carter first entered the Georgia legislature) and has established a substantial record. For a "quick read" on a legislator's record it is often useful to examine the "ratings" or "score cards" issued by various lobbying and issue-oriented groups. With respect to foreign policy, the best-known and most widely accepted are the "National Security Index" compiled by the American Security Council, a conservative group, and the annual "Voting Record" published by Americans for Democratic Action, a liberal group.* The NSI is based on a cumulative total of 50 roll-call votes during the past ten years. On these 50 votes, Senator George McGovern has, according to NSI, the worst record of any current Senator, having voted wrong all 50 times. Senator Kennedy ties (with Wisconsin's Gaylord Nelson) for next worst, having cast one right vote and 49 wrong ones. Conversely, the ADA ratings give Kennedy the best foreign-policy record in the Senate, having cast 73 right votes and 3 wrong ones, a shade better than that of McGovern, who cast 69 right votes and 3 wrong, and Nelson, who cast 75 right and 4 wrong. (Kennedy's ADA rating since 1972 is perfect.)

An inherent limitation of these group ratings is that they sample only a small number of the votes taken each year. For a more careful look at the record, I have undertaken a study of all the Senate roll calls on issues of foreign or defense policy in which Senator Kennedy voted from 1963 to October 1979. From this study, it is possible to formulate ten categories covering most of the controversial and continuing areas of policy.

These include four categories of foreign aid, two categories of defense policy, two categories concerning relations with friendly and unfriendly powers, and one each concerning the U.S. presence abroad and U.S. policy toward Israel and the Middle East. This is what the study shows:†

1. Foreign Economic Aid

On 52 roll calls on funding, expanding, or restricting foreign economic aid, Kennedy voted on the pro-foreign aid side 51 times. By comparison, the Senate as a whole voted pro-foreign aid 36 times. Democratic Senators, as a group, also voted on the pro side 33 times, while Northern Democrats as a group voted pro 44 times.

2. Foreign Aid to and through International Organizations

This category includes such things as U.S. contributions to the UN and to international lending institutions. Of 40 such roll calls, Kennedy voted in favor 38 times. By comparison, the Senate as a whole voted in favor 29 times; Democrats as a group 27 times, and Northern Democrats 32 times.

3. Foreign Military Aid

Of 51 roll calls on foreign military aid, Kennedy voted in favor 18 times. The Senate as a whole voted in favor 32 times, Democrats as a group 19 times, and Northern Democrats 15 times. It is interesting to note that Kennedy, although opposing foreign military aid more than 60 per cent of the time, still is marginally more favorable to it than the average Northern Democrat. This suggests that Kennedy's strong support for foreign aid as a concept tends to mitigate his opposition to military aid.

4. Foreign Aid—General

This category includes votes on the overall administration of foreign-aid programs or on funding

* The NSI includes only foreign and defense issues, whereas ADA includes domestic issues as well, but it is easy to separate out the foreign and defense issues, as has been done in the figures provided here.

† These categories do not include votes concerning the war in Indochina, the draft, or the division of war powers between the legislative and executive branches. Nor do they include other occasional areas of Senate action such as tariffs and minor treaties. In each category a criterion of significance was applied excluding roll calls which were unanimous or near unanimous, i.e., where fewer than 10 per cent of the votes were on the losing side or where fewer than 67 Senators were present. In addition, purely trivial votes were excluded, e.g., regional competition over which shipyard shall receive a given naval contract. Otherwise, all votes were counted in their respective category with the exception of the Panama Canal Treaties. It was necessary to select the three most important, out of the 80 roll calls which were held on these treaties, for inclusion in the category concerning U.S. presence abroad. To have included all 80 would have been to overwhelm the category and rob it of meaning. All data are from the *Congressional Quarterly Almanac*.

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bills which combine the three previous categories. Of 59 such roll calls, Kennedy voted on the pro side 58 times. The Senate as a whole voted pro 48 times, the Democrats 42 times, and the Northern Democrats 48 times.

Thus, in sum, Kennedy's record on foreign aid, other than military, is 147 favorable votes and only 4 unfavorable. Bearing in mind that these figures exclude all unanimous or near unanimous votes, this is a remarkable record, and almost certainly ranks Kennedy as the single most consistent supporter of (non-military) foreign aid in the Senate.

5. Defense—Strategic Nuclear

This category includes funding of U.S. strategic nuclear forces and some votes concerning U.S. strategic policy. Of 55 roll calls, Kennedy voted for supporting or strengthening U.S. strategic programs 4 times. By comparison, the Senate voted pro 42 times, Democrats as a group 17 times, and Northern Democrats 9 times. Nuclear strategic policy is an important interest of Kennedy's. It is noteworthy that his commitment to limiting U.S. nuclear forces is more than twice as great as that of the Northern Democrats as a group.

6. Defense—General

This category includes funding for non-strategic forces as well as the overall level of U.S. defense effort. Of 68 roll calls, Kennedy voted pro-defense 13 times, while the Senate as a whole voted pro 51 times, the Democrats 28 times, the Northern Democrats 17 times. Thus Kennedy's record is pro-defense only half as often as the Democrats as a group and marginally less often than the Northern Democrats.

7. Relations with Hostile Powers

This category includes votes on U.S. relations with the USSR, other Communist and radical regimes, as well as a few votes concerning relations with OPEC. Of 36 roll calls, Kennedy voted for taking a tougher stance 4 times. The Senate as a whole voted for toughness 16 times, the Democrats 11 times, and the Northern Democrats 10 times. Kennedy, then, favors a tough line in dealing with these countries much less frequently even than other Northern Democrats.

8. Relations with Flawed Friendly Powers

This category comprises U.S. relations with countries which are friendly to the U.S., but which, because of some aspect of their domestic or foreign policies, are viewed by us with ambivalence. Examples of such countries are Chile, Turkey, Taiwan, and Zimbabwe Rhodesia. Of 43 roll calls, Kennedy favored taking a tougher stance toward these countries 42 times. The Senate as a whole favored toughness 19 times, the Senate Democrats 38 times, and the Northern Democrats 40 times. The comparison of this category with the previous one is interesting. Kennedy voted to get tough with hostile powers 11 per cent of the time; he voted to get tough with friendly powers 97 per cent of the time.

9. U.S. Presence Abroad

This category includes votes on the level of U.S. forces stationed abroad, the development of U.S. foreign bases, the Panama Canal Treaties, and support for such non-military instruments of U.S. international presence as Radio Free Europe and the U.S. Information Agency.

Of 24 roll calls, Kennedy voted for a stronger U.S. presence abroad 8 times while the Senate voted for a stronger presence 17 times, the Democrats 8 times, and the Northern Democrats 6 times. It is noteworthy that this and foreign military aid are the only two categories on which Kennedy's record tends more toward the Center than does that of his fellow Northern Democrats. On foreign aid, military policy, and relations with hostile and flawed friendly powers, he is further from the Center. This suggests that while Kennedy's record is very "liberal" or "dovish" indeed, it does not seem to be motivated primarily by a spirit of isolationism.

10. Middle East/Israel

This category comprises votes concerning U.S. military or policy support for Israel.

Of 17 roll calls Kennedy voted on the pro-Israel side 15 times, as did the Democrats and the Northern Democrats. The Senate as a whole voted pro-Israel 16 times.

IV

Roll-call votes provide a record of how a Senator behaves as a legislator, but to see how a Senator acts as a political and intellectual leader, it is necessary to examine his speeches, writings, and the causes to which he lends himself. Kennedy has taken an especially active interest in three areas of foreign policy. These are human rights in countries whose governments are allied with or friendly to the U.S.; relations with governments which are hostile to the U.S.; and arms control.

Human Rights

Kennedy keeps a vigilant eye on human-rights violations in a number of countries. He frequently sends out press releases and enters statements in the *Congressional Record* spotlighting and demanding stern diplomatic action by the U.S. to punish the offending governments. Often he has introduced legislation designed to cut off aid to the violators. Despite his generally avid support

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for foreign aid, he believes that "the United States should refuse to provide other than humanitarian aid to countries whose governments are gross violators of human rights and fail to make substantial reforms." Moreover, he appears to hold very exacting standards for judging what constitutes "substantial reforms." Earlier this year, he "strongly opposed" the Hayakawa-McGovern Resolution, which the Senate overwhelmingly adopted, to send a team of U.S. observers to monitor the elections held in Zimbabwe Rhodesia. He objected to dignifying these elections even with observers because "the Patriotic Front and other opposition organizations can neither engage in full political campaigning and activities nor publish their views" and because "free elections cannot be held in conditions of insecurity and intimidation."

Not only would he terminate aid, Kennedy also favors barring private bank loans to countries violating human rights and has introduced a bill requiring public disclosure of such loans to any government to which U.S. assistance has been denied or reduced for violations of human rights.

Kennedy has denounced South Korea as "a veritable police state" and has served as a spokesman for a group of Senators and Congressmen who issued a warning last April that "continued military support for South Korea may make the United States an accomplice to political repression." But Kennedy's most intense interest has focused on the governments of Latin America. He has condemned the "appalling human-rights situation in El Salvador," and called on the U.S. "to end all but humanitarian aid to El Salvador and to reconsider the entire range of our relationships with its government." Kennedy spearheaded the drive to cut off military aid to Argentina and he strongly protested the approval granted last year by the Carter administration of a $270-million loan to Argentina by the Export-Import Bank. He has spoken out against human-rights violations in Paraguay, Uruguay, Brazil, and the Dominican Republic.

Although the U.S. has cut off all military and economic aid to Chile, Kennedy believes that "these signals have not been strong enough." He has advocated that, in addition, we consider seeking to block multilateral aid to Chile, and that we "withdraw all but essential U.S. personnel from Chile and consider permanent recall of our Ambassador. We should consider trade sanctions against Chile. And we should suspend any further Export-Import Bank credits or OPIC [Overseas Private Investment Corporation] guarantees . . . [and] scrutinize more closely the continuing loans and investments made by U.S. private banks in Chile."

Perhaps the single country to which Kennedy has devoted the most attention concerning human rights has been Nicaragua. In 1977, Kennedy, together with Frank Church, introduced legislation to cut off military aid to Nicaragua. In presenting the bill on the floor, Kennedy observed that repression was on the rise in Nicaragua "primarily in response to a terrorist raid by Cuban-backed Sandinist National Liberation Front insurgents" but that "the threat of Cuban intervention is minimal, according to all reasonably objective observers. Insurgent strength is estimated at only 50 men in Nicaragua—this is hardly a serious threat." In October 1978, Kennedy accused the Nicaraguan National Guard of having "killed thousands of innocent civilians," and he called for cutting off all aid to that country. In May 1979, he demanded the recall of the U.S. Ambassador, a cut-off not only of aid but of all credits, and a U.S. effort to block international loans to Nicaragua; he further called on the U.S. to "impose sanctions on the meat and sugar exports by Nicaragua to this country [and to] encourage corresponding measures by the European importers of Nicaraguan coffee and cotton." Immediately upon the resignation of Somoza, Kennedy issued a statement calling on the U.S. to "promptly recognize this new government which is supported by all of the democratic political forces in Nicaragua."

An interesting aspect of Kennedy's views is that his evaluations of certain countries' human-rights practices seem to vary from the evaluations made by Freedom House, regarded by many as the authority on such questions. In a major address last year on U.S. relations with Latin America, Kennedy observed: "In our dedication to human rights and democracy, we are joined by such nations as Venezuela, Colombia, Costa Rica, Jamaica, Mexico, and most recently the Dominican Republic." According to Freedom House, Mexico has the identical ranking for civil liberties and political rights as has El Salvador, the nation which Kennedy proposes to punish for its "appalling" practices. Jamaica is the only non-Latin nation on his list of approval and it is singled out later in the same speech as a "political democrac[y] struggling for social democracy," yet no mention is made of Barbados, the Bahamas, or Trinidad and Tobago, three Caribbean nations which received better ratings from Freedom House than Jamaica does. The Dominican Republic is deemed to have joined the ranks of those dedicated to human rights and democracy "most recently," by which is meant upon the election as President of Antonio Guzman, political heir to Juan Bosch. Yet even before the election of Guzman, the Dominican Republic, according to Freedom House, rated better than Mexico and only a hair below Jamaica.

What these discrepancies suggest is that Kennedy's evaluation of a nation's human-rights practices is not solidly based on the traditionally recognized civil liberties and political rights. A Left-of-Center stance in political philosophy ap-

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pears to enhance a nation's human-rights record in Kennedy's eyes, while a Right-of-Center stance has the opposite effect.

Relations with Hostile Powers

KENNEDY is a strong supporter of détente with the USSR, and he has frequently warned against the adoption of too belligerent a tone in our dealings with the Soviets. "Pursuit of détente and human rights is too serious an imperative for us to be sidetracked into righteous posturing and rhetoric which set back either or both of these objectives," he says. And he believes that American policy must take into account "the likelihood that the Soviet leadership feels beset by an unprecedented number of internal and external challenges." As Kennedy describes it, there are two factions within the Soviet government, one favoring détente and domestic liberalization and the other opposing these. Exhibitions of toughness by the U.S. in dealing with the Russians will serve to strengthen the repressive hawks in the Kremlin, while U.S. gestures of good will strengthen the permissive doves. After the Soviet government sentenced Yuri Orlov, the founder of the Soviet Helsinki Monitoring Group, to jail in 1978, various kinds of retaliation by the U.S. were widely discussed. Kennedy spoke against retaliation, because "Soviet advocates of confrontation with the U.S. would have one more argument to use against the advocates of cooperation and détente." On other occasions he has warned that deployment of additional strategic weapons by the United States "will be used by Soviet opponents of better relations with the United States as evidence that we are not committed to halting the arms race."

Kennedy has written that:

> It may be that a continuing reduction of international tensions, coupled with a rising Soviet standard of living, will in time help to liberalize Soviet society—*despite today's concessions made to repressive elements in the Politburo by Soviet supporters of improved U.S.-Soviet relations* (emphasis added).

This last phrase is particularly interesting. Kennedy surely counts Brezhnev among the Soviet supporters of improved relations. He has often quoted approvingly from things Brezhnev has said to him, during their private conversations, about the importance of peace. Thus Kennedy's description seems almost to exculpate Brezhnev from recent Soviet human-rights violations. It suggests a picture of a peace-loving leader, beset by domestic political problems, forced by the opposition to take repressive measures which he does not in his heart support. It is not clear whether Kennedy's interpretation is a matter of elaborate speculation or whether he has an unrevealed source of intelligence on Politburo deliberations.

Kennedy has warned aganst underestimating how much genuine progress has taken place under détente. "Neither we nor the Russians (apparently) now automatically view every action by the other as intrinsically hostile." But the question has never been whether "every action" was intrinsically hostile; it has been rather whether the overall objective of the Soviet Union was intrinsically hostile, and there is a strong suggestion that Kennedy's answer is no. To be sure, Kennedy thinks that "the Soviet Union will no doubt continue to challenge the United States as a world power." Yet rarely does he convey the sense that this challenge differs from the situation of two boys competing for athletic letters, scholastic honors, or girlfriends, or that it is something more profound and more deadly than a symbolic competition. "We should respect the Soviet desire to feel equal," he says, "yet there is no point in countenancing foolishness on Moscow's part nor in matching it with our own." In the context, "foolishness" means the attempt to expand international political and military influence. What, then, does it mean that we should neither countenance it nor match it? That we will win a moral victory by refusing to compete with the Soviets on such a low level? What will we do with such moral victories? In a similar vein, Kennedy has identified "paranoia" as one of the major causes of U.S. opposition to the SALT II treaty. In light of the fact that in 1972 the Senate approved SALT I by a vote of 88-2, Kennedy's analysis leaves open the question of what has caused such an alarming rise in American "paranoia" during these past seven years.

Kennedy's reaction to the Yom Kippur War is illustrative. It is worth recalling that the high-point of détente began with the May 1972 Moscow summit at which Nixon and Brezhnev signed SALT I and many other agreements including the Declaration of Basic Principles of Relations between the two countries. Détente euphoria lasted, perhaps not entirely coincidentally, through the 1972 elections and well into 1973—until the Yom Kippur War. It was apparent almost at once that the Soviets had been deeply involved in the planning and even in aspects of the execution of the surprise attack on Israel. And they were brazen in their exhortations to the other Arab states to join the war and the oil boycott of the West. This behavior was difficult to reconcile with the agreement, undertaken in the second point of the Declaration of Basic Principles, that "the U.S. and the USSR attach major importance to preventing the development of situations capable of causing a dangerous exacerbation of their relations." This was a turning point at which many Americans began to reconsider the existing détente. A search of the *Congressional Record* of this period reveals no substantial comment by Kennedy on these events until about three or four months after the war when he said in a speech:

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> I believe that this is an historic moment in the history of American foreign policy. The President and Secretary Kissinger have been laboring to create a new structure of peace. Agreements have been reached with both Russia and China. The Middle East may at long last have a chance to move from a situation of repeated conflicts to a genuine peace. And a series of negotiations is in progress to built upon efforts made so far in détente.
>
> Whether we will sustain these efforts, or lose today's chance to pass decisively beyond the cold war, will depend in part on what happens during the coming critical phase of the SALT talks.

Apparently the events of the recent past had not led Kennedy to any revaluation of Soviet intentions.

KENNEDY's role in pushing the Carter administration toward recognition of China was the culmination of a twelve-year-long effort. "As long ago as 1966, a small number of us in Washington called for new directions in our China policy," Kennedy recalls. In 1969, Kennedy set forth a position which, *Newsweek* reported, "went farther than any other Kennedy or any other major U.S. politician—in urging that the U.S. go all out toward cultivating relations with Peking."

In these early efforts, Kennedy took the view that improvement of relations with Peking should not come at the expense of Taiwan. By 1971, a considerable body of U.S. opinion had developed in favor of supporting a "two-China" policy at the UN. Kennedy's views, however, had progressed by then. He had come to the conviction that "the People's Republic of China should be granted its legitimate seat in the United Nations as the sole government of China." So strongly did Kennedy feel about this that he introduced a bill designed to prevent the U.S. from adopting a two-China aproach. "However reasonable such a dual representation compromise might seem to non-Chinese," he argued, "it is unacceptable to the Chinese. . . . We must recognize that it is vital to the peace and progress of the world that Peking be brought into the international community." Kennedy even said that he would rather the U.S. continue its traditional policy of complete opposition to Peking than to shift to a two-China approach. He explained that he felt sure that Peking was likely to be admitted soon even over U.S. objections and that he would rather see the U.S. suffer the humiliation of such a defeat than have entry offered to Peking on terms which it would not accept. He said that by continuing our old position "the U.S. would simply go down with the ship. Even that seems better to me than advocating a dual representation policy—a policy that would prevent Peking's participation in the UN for the foreseeable future." The same attitude, that it is important to meet China on its own terms, was again present in Kennedy's efforts in 1978 to prod the Carter administration. "We can resolve the Taiwan issue as long as American policy respects China's principles," he said, adding that "it is neither necessary nor useful" to seek a pledge from Peking not to use force in its pursuit of reunification with Taiwan.

However, one key question on which Kennedy has drawn the line against accepting the Chinese position is on the Chinese desire to cooperate with the U.S. at the expense of the Russians. In response to those who would "play the China card," Kennedy wrote in 1974:

> It is tempting for the United States to engage in a serious effort to play the Soviet Union and China off against one another, in a "triangular politics" of great powers that bears a vague but disquieting resemblance to Orwell's prophecy in 1984. Yet giving in to this temptation would be misguided or worse.

As in the case of China, Kennedy has long advocated normalization of relations with Cuba, a position he set forth in an article in the New York *Times Magazine* in January 1973, and in legislation which he introduced in 1975. At the time of the ground-breaking visit to Cuba by Senators Javits and Pell, the Washington *Post* reported on an earlier visit to Cuba by some of Kennedy's aides and quoted a Cuban source as saying that "Senator Kennedy has been making efforts to come to Cuba 'for close to two years and friends of his have come here to put out feelers on several previous occasions.' "

Kennedy has made clear that he is concerned about human rights in Cuba, but feels that this should not impede progress toward normalization, noting that "we have relations with nations—and in fact provide assistance to some of them—which have equal or worse records of violations of human rights than Cuba—Chile, Brazil, Uruguay, the USSR, the People's Republic of China, India, etc." Rather than make improvement of Cuba's human-rights practices a precondition of normalization, Kennedy hopes that normalization will help to solve Cuba's human-rights problems. He says:

> Although Cuba has a program of rehabilitation that has seen numerous prisoners released, some political detainees still remain. Hopefully, in the process of normalizing relations, the issue of political prisoners will be one of those discussed. Clearly our past policy of isolation and hostility has not achieved any direct impact on their situation—the changes and improvements have occurred despite, rather than because of, our policy. With an end to hostile relations between our two countries, the atmosphere may lead to an opportunity for the remaining prisoners to be released or to emigrate.

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This seems rather a delicate formulation in light of the fact that Castro has allowed the outside world no accurate knowledge about the status or number of political prisoners, and that some respected observers guess that Cuba may have one of the highest proportions of political prisoners per capita in the world.

On another occasion Kennedy said: "The continued refusal of the government of Cuba to permit objective international organizations to visit maximum-security areas and interview prisoners privately continues to disturb many Americans." What is especially noteworthy about this statement is that the expression of concern is limited to maximum-security areas because Kennedy reported that members of his staff recently visited some other-than-maximum-security areas and found that "conditions appear adequate." But no international organization had been allowed to inspect these areas. Did Kennedy view his staff's visit as having fulfilled the same purpose? If so, why did they produce no public report? Where did they go and what did they see? Were they allowed to interview prisoners privately? What specifically was "adequate" about the conditions? It is hard to understand how a champion of human rights could treat this question in so offhand a manner.

SINCE shortly after the fall of South Vietnam Kennedy has been urging normalization of relations with the government of Vietnam. Kennedy's view is that the violation of the Paris peace accords and the conquest of South Vietnam were as much the fault of the United States as of North Vietnam:

> Even after the Paris peace accords were signed in 1973, there was no evidence that any serious effort was made by either side to enforce the terms of the agreement—terms that could have led to a genuine political settlement. Instead, both sides moved toward the final military confrontation. We gambled—and South Vietnam lost all.

In the absence of formal diplomatic ties, the government of Vietnam has often chosen to deal with the United States through Senator Kennedy, as well as through Senator McGovern. In December 1975, North Vietnam's announcement of its willingness to return the remains of the last two U.S. servicemen to die in Vietnam came in a letter from Foreign Minister Nguyen Duy Trinh to Kennedy which expressed appreciation for Kennedy's support of normalization and reconstruction assistance to Vietnam. Then in July 1976, Kennedy announced that he had received "a cable and a telephone call from the Vietnam embassy in Paris indicating that American citizens still in South Vietnam will be authorized to leave Vietnam." In September 1978, the Vietnamese used Kennedy as their vehicle to hint at a shift in their negotiating position away from the demand that U.S. reparations payments must precede the establishment of diplomatic relations. "The only written communication to surface on the subject from the Vietnamese," reported the *Wall Street Journal*, was "a letter from Premier Pham Van Dong to Senator Edward Kennedy."

Kennedy has been unusually kind in his remarks about Vietnam. After the announced repatriation of Americans held in South Vietnam, Kennedy said that he wanted to "commend the government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam for another gesture of good will to the American people, and for continuing to respond to the many humanitarian issues that remain in the aftermath of the long war." Kennedy's Subcommittee on Refugees and Escapees issued a staff report in 1976 which praised the Vietnamese "new economic zones." Many Vietnamese refugees have described these as a form of involuntary internal exile to conditions of great hardship where large numbers have died. The Subcommittee report observed that the new government in Indochina faced a problem created by "falsely urbanized centers, overpopulated with refugees, often unemployed, from the rural countryside." The report went on to say that in response to this problem "in South Vietnam . . . a series of 'new economic zones' have been created to reintegrate refugees from the countryside into rural life." The report did not explain why reintegrating refugees from the countryside into rural life should be so difficult or should require coercive measures. It noted that these efforts "are necessarily ambitious," but that they are "founded on clearly understood needs and problems and a realistic assessment of available and potential resources." In a similar vein, Kennedy in 1976 said about Cambodia, where the government had depopulated the cities, that "the authorities have necessarily focused all attention on rural areas and increasing food production."

The dramatic and heartrending problems of the "boat people" and other Indochinese refugees have drawn worldwide attention and have also opened a major debate on the American Left over criticism of the government of Vietnam. Kennedy has taken an active interest in the refugees and has pushed for increased funding and liberalized immigration procedures to help ease their plight. At the same time he has shied away from criticism of the government of Vietnam. Kennedy apparently shares the view, vehemently disputed by "boat people" who have reached the U.S., that the flight from Vietnam is a result of economic conditions. In a recent major address on the problem he called on the U.S. to "deal directly with Vietnam to help ameliorate conditions that contribute to the outflow of refugees. . . . By responding to the humanitarian needs of the Vietnamese . . . [for] relief and reconstruction programs . . . we will also

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help stabilize conditions and perhaps stem the flow of refugees." Kennedy has condemned "those within Vietnam and those sources outside Vietnam, as well, who are trafficking in human lives for profit," but these guilty parties seem not to include the government of Vietnam. On the other hand, Kennedy has called on the *non*-Communist governments of Southeast Asia "to abide by international law and human rights standards, by granting temporary asylum to *bona fide* refugees" (his emphasis).

KENNEDY'S tone toward friendly governments seems to contrast sharply with his tone toward unfriendly ones. Here are some examples.

ON CHILE:

> A military junta has violated not only the norms of Chilean law but the most fundamental standards of law of Western civilization. It has tortured. It has killed. It has stifled every democratic freedom.
>
> It has condoned and perpetrated the most brutal forms of violence in its own defense. In doing so it has said that violence, from assassination to torture, are acceptable forms of conduct.

ON THE USSR:

> [T]he pace of change [i.e., liberalization] will inevitably be slow, with very real limits on the extent to which the Soviet Union will adapt in ways that are to our liking—just as our evolution will rarely (if ever) meet Soviet desires for American society.

ON ZIMBABWE RHODESIA:

> This [i.e., the "internal settlement"] is a constitution which does not protect basic human rights and which does not provide a foundation for true self-determination.

ON THE USSR:

> [P]rogress . . . can and must be made in order to make the world safe for diversity.

ON ARGENTINA:

> Argentina has the dubious distinction of having more political prisoners than the rest of the hemisphere combined.

ON CUBA:

> [S]ome political detainees still remain.

ON VARIOUS FRIENDLY GOVERNMENTS:

> Whether in Chile, in Southern Africa, or in Korea, we must heed the voices of the victims and instill in them the renewed hope that America will once more respond to its own heritage and its own ideals.
>
> We must stand with the oppressed, not the oppressors.
>
> We must stand with the defenders of human rights, not with those who defile them.

ON CUBA:

> [T]he U.S. . . . should respect the experiment that has taken place in Cuba and normalize relations with it.

Kennedy is perhaps aware of the contradiction here and he has defended his position by arguing that "the most fundamental human right remains freedom from war." This is an idea not widely shared by non-pacifists. Yet even if this idea is germane to relations with the Soviet Union, it is unclear why it would have bearing on relations with Cuba, Vietnam, and other Communist countries. And even with regard to the USSR, it is by no means self-evident that muting American objection to Soviet human-rights practices helps to preserve peace.

Kennedy's contradictory approach to human rights has led him into another kind of potentially embarrassing situation. Since President Carter brought the human-rights issue to the fore in the early days of his administration, those active in the international human-rights struggle have observed that a number of 1960's-style New Leftists and other radical elements have thrown themselves into a certain kind of one-sided human-rights activity. Their vehicles are such groups as the Institute for Policy Studies, the Coalition for New Foreign and Military Policies (the group which honored Tom Hayden and Jane Fonda at the start of their recent national tour), the North American Coalition for Human Rights in Korea (a group much more concerned about repression in South Korea than in North Korea), and others. Kennedy has maintained active contact with these groups in his human-rights work, sometimes issuing joint statements with them, entering their material in the *Congressional Record*, and relying on them for information.

In 1976 Kennedy eulogized Orlando Letelier as "a good man as well as a man of great intellectual capacity and courage" who was killed because he "believed in justice and freedom." Letelier was the victim of a heinous crime, but subsequent revelations of his connections with the Cuban secret police make Kennedy's encomium sound odd. In 1978 Kennedy issued a statement supporting the refusal of Harry Bridges's International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union to load certain weapons for shipment to Chile. Nothing in the statement indicated an awareness of what everyone with even a passing knowledge of U.S. labor history knows: that the ILWU is just as likely to refuse to ship weapons to NATO should it be engaged in war against the Warsaw Pact.

In all these dealings, Kennedy seems not to observe the dictum which has guided many American liberals in various battles over the past several

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decades—to avoid making common cause with the anti-democratic Left.

Arms Control

KENNEDY is a sharp critic of U.S. defense spending. He sought out the opportunity to testify at the Senate Budget Committee's hearings on the 1977 budget in order to raise his voice against "constantly adding more money for defense—a practice which has been the trend in Congress since I have been here these past fourteen years." Measured in constant dollars defense spending had risen only in three of the previous thirteen years, the three main years of the escalation of U.S. participation in the Vietnam war. During each one of the other ten years, constant-dollar spending actually declined, so that at the time Kennedy was speaking it was about 17 per-cent lower than it had been when he entered the Senate.

Kennedy has taken a special interest in the area of strategic nuclear policy and arms control, and has carved out for himself an important role on these issues, most recently as the Senate's leading proponent of a comprehensive nuclear test ban. In connection with his fight against the ABM in the late 60's, Kennedy asked some scholars to put together a book compiling the arguments against the ABM. The men he approached were Jerome Wiesner, former science adviser to President Kennedy, and Abram Chayes, who later became the chief foreign-policy adviser to the 1972 McGovern campaign. Among the contributors to the book, in addition to Wiesner and Chayes, were George Rathjens, Jeremy Stone, Mason Willrich, Marshall Shulman, and Adam Yarmolinsky. These men are well-known members of what is sometimes called the "arms-control community," a group of scholars and public officials who have developed and propagated what John Newhouse, a sympathizer, has called the "theology" of arms control.

This theology—to which Kennedy adheres—consists of three main parts. The first is a notion of fundamental truth. The second is an explanation of why some people don't behave in accord with that truth. The third is a formula for correcting the problem.

The fundamental truth of the arms-control theology begins with the idea that nuclear weapons are so destructive that they can have no use other than deterrence of other nuclear weapons. "There is no point in trying to define relative national power in terms of weapons that cannot be used without risks to the future of the world," says Kennedy. Further, each side should have the ability to deter the other; it was in the U.S. national interest to allow the Soviets in the 1960's to catch up with us in nuclear weaponry. As Kennedy puts it, "deterrence of nuclear attack must be mutual . . . we can only be safe from the threat of a nuclear holocaust if the Soviet Union feels that its nuclear deterrent is secure, as well." Because of this mutual stalemate, it does not matter who has a stronger nuclear force.

Kennedy said last year:

> . . . nuclear superiority lost most of its meaning over 15 years ago, when both sides possessed enough nuclear weapons to inflict unacceptable damage to the other after any first strike. President Brezhnev told me last month that he was convinced that even one nuclear bomb dropped by one side over the other would result in a general nuclear exchange—a nuclear holocaust not only for our two nations but for the entire world.

In light of this fact, it is clear, so the theology holds, that the U.S. has no need, virtually ever, to augment its forces. "If . . . we continue to stress the irreducible elements of mutual assured destruction," says Kennedy, ". . . then our massive nuclear arsenal will speak for itself: It needs no bolstering." This viewpoint helps to explain why Kennedy voted against strategic defense programs on 51 out of 55 occasions.

The second part of the theology attempts to explain why certain people, in particular those governing the two superpowers, have not yet come to see the foregoing fundamental truths. The first reason is that there are powerful elements in both societies who have a vested interest in nuclear arms production. These include the military, some nuclear scientists, and the defense contractors, who are seen as combining to make up a formidable lobby. Kennedy laments that "it is easy to become discouraged by the energy and resourcefulness of the people and institutions working on weapons technology and by the enormous incentives which motivate some of them." Moreover the pro-nuclear forces on each side feed off their counterparts on the other. "Both their generals and ours use evidence of new developments on the other side to justify new developments of their own," explains Kennedy. This constitutes ". . . a strange but unspoken alliance of interests and reactions," called the "action/reaction cycle" through which the arms race will, so the theology holds, spiral onward and upward to Armageddon.

Two key factors help to drive the spiral. One is the tendency to overstate the capability of the adversary. In 1976, for example, Kennedy protested that "it is deeply disturbing to hear once again a Pentagon rhetoric to justify the defense budget that grossly inflates Soviet strength and deflates our own." Of course it is not known for certain whether Kremlin planners make similar overestimates of U.S. programs, but the danger that they may do so requires that we bend over backward to avoid providing grist "for their fears." The other factor driving the arms spiral is technology. The scientists produce new weapons faster than the diplomats can control them. A corollary of this is

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that the United States bears a disproportionate share of responsibility for the arms race. Kennedy has put it this way: "The United States has taken the lead in most new types of nuclear technology; therefore, the decision whether to expand the competition in arms into new areas is largely in our hands." It is not clear why Kennedy believes that the Russians would not anyway proceed into areas where the U.S. abstains, especially in light of Soviet leadership in anti-satellite warfare and the "race" which the Soviet Union continues to run with itself in such areas as chemical warfare, strategic air defense, and civil defense.

The third part of the theology sets forth the remedy. "We can break that nuclear spiral only if we have the political will to stand up to the weapons makers in both countries and cry 'Halt,'" declares Kennedy. The logical place to begin is, of course, at home. "We must practice restraint and demand that the Soviet Union do the same." But what should we do if the Soviets fail to respond in kind? From the beginning of SALT in 1969 the U.S. was concerned about the giant Soviet SS-9 ICBM. (The U.S. had refrained from building such giants.) By the mid-70's the Soviets had begun to replace these with an even larger and better version, the SS-18, and had developed a MIRV capability which made these especially menacing to American ICBM's. Kennedy in 1975 argued strongly against any U.S. countermove:

> What we should be doing is going to the SALT talks and insisting that the Soviet Union join us in giving up a counterforce option against land-based missiles and we must do this without first building—or even developing—so-called bargaining chips.

This is precisely what U.S. negotiators had been trying to do for six years already, and what they continued to do for four more years. But the Soviets refused to budge, which is why the Carter administration reluctantly decided to move ahead with plans to deploy the MX. Carter's decision has drawn heavy fire from Kennedy:

> For a decade we have been trying to teach the Soviets a fundamental strategic lesson—that an invulnerable deterrent, a secure retaliatory force, adds to stability. It is time that we relearned that lesson ourselves.

The point seems to be that no matter for how long or how dramatically the Soviets demonstrate their refusal to accept our concept of mutual deterrence, we must perservere in our adherence to it and in our policy of unilateral restraint.

Perhaps the best-known disciple of the arms-control theology in which Kennedy believes has been Paul Warnke. Warnke's resignation last year from his position as chief U.S. SALT negotiator was widely interpreted as having been encouraged by the Carter administration in order to put some distance between the SALT treaty and his controversial views. At the time, Kennedy took a verbal swipe at the administration for letting Warnke go and said of him:

> His clear and reasoned speeches around this country have made a compelling case for SALT. When Paul resigns at the end of this month our nation will lose one of its toughest and ablest negotiators, one of the most effective arms-control directors, and one of the most dedicated public servants it has ever had. Paul Warnke is surpassed by no one in his commitment to the security of our nation and to arms control and disarmament.

Kennedy's many pronouncements serve to illustrate an important contradiction that lies at the core of arms-control theology. If both sides have such a superfluity of weapons that we needn't worry when the Russians build more, then why is an arms race held to be so dangerous? If it is no threat to us when the Soviets alone are building weapons, why are we in dire jeopardy if we build them as well?

Like other theologies, moreover, the arms-control theology tends to be impervious to experience. Kennedy's repetitious litany has led Stephen Rosenfeld, the Washington *Post*'s liberal foreign-policy analyst, to comment:

> The notion that the United States hurts its chances for agreement by tending to its defenses is a holdover from a period in the 1960's and earlier when American strategic superiority and momentum were plain. But that period is past. Where has Kennedy been?

Rosenfeld wrote this four years ago. Wherever it was that Kennedy "had been," he appears to be there still.

V

THE Kennedys have been regarded by many as interested more in the exercise of power than in ideology. One sometimes hears it asked how much of Senator Kennedy's record reflects "true beliefs" which may be expected to remain constant, and how much may have been transient responses to passing political currents. The question, of course, cannot be answered. But two observations are pertinent. One is that Kennedy's main foreign-policy interests, despite certain inconsistencies already noted, tend to fit into a broader world view which Kennedy has on occasion tried to articulate. The second is that his ideas seems to have remained constant for a substantial period of time.

After the fall of South Vietnam in 1975, Kennedy, together with Senator Cranston, did the nation a service by organizing an extraordinary Senate session. Two days were given not to specific bills and amendments, but to consideration

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of "the underlying foreign and military policy issues facing the nation in the aftermath of the Indochina tragedy." Kennedy took this opportunity to lay out his conception of the "five vital interests" which should shape U.S. policy. These are:

1. Nuclear arms control.
2. Defining carefully our overseas security commitments, which Kennedy believes should be limted to Western Europe, Japan, and Israel. Korea seems to be a borderline case where Kennedy evidently favors slow disengagement (slow, so as not to alarm Japan). Kennedy has said about Africa that he is against "bringing that continent within the compass of an outmoded concept of containment." Since this is the only concept of containment that we have, Kennedy is in effect opposed to resisting Communist expansion anywhere in Africa.
3. To avoid "trying to manipulate physically the process of change in a complex and difficult world." In another speech at about the same time Kennedy said that "Vietnam is the most painful lesson we have ever learned about the aspirations of other peoples" and that "we are being challenged to accept new concepts of nationalism and independence"—two observations which now seem to apply to Cambodia and Laos as well as they apply to the U.S.
4. "A global economic compact designed to promote a more equitable distribution of the world's wealth."
5. International human rights.

An underlying theme of this program is that the United States is less menaced by Communism than we have in the past believed.

Kennedy has held to this general perspective for at least twelve years. In *Decisions for a Decade*, a book published in 1968, but clearly written not later than 1967, Kennedy observed that "the portrait of a Stalinist Russia committed to our destruction has faded" and that "every European nation, democratic or Communist, . . . is more concerned with developing economically than with exporting revolution."

In the same book Kennedy advocated a reduction in U.S. commitments abroad, especially a "reduction of American involvement in the military and economic affairs of Europe," and a reassessment of the role of NATO, an institution which Kennedy felt was "better suited to yesterday's dangers than to tomorrow's opportunities." As to other parts of the world, Kennedy warned America to avoid opposing what he saw as the tide of inevitable change:

> . . . guerrilla movements, despite their use of terror and violence, will frequently offer discontented people a faith, an organization, a way of life. To these people, the terror which we abhor is not that much worse from the life of poverty and pestilence which they seek to escape. . . . It is, to put it bluntly, not our business to suppress these movements.

In addition Kennedy called on developed nations to give "1 per cent of their gross national product to world development programs" and to channel this through multilateral institutions because "bilateral aid is in many respects stifling." And he recommended that we "make clear our disapproval of repressive measures" by right-wing governments in Latin America. In 1968, Kennedy wrote in his introduction to the book he inspired against the ABM that "arms-limitation talks with the Soviets" offer "the only real hope for world stability and security."

It can be seen, then, that all the main themes of 1975 were also the themes of 1967-68, and they have remained constant into 1979. This, together with Kennedy's voting record, which shows no significant changes over seventeen years, suggest a long-term consistency of view.

VI

KENNEDY's views on foreign policy seem to convey an aura of idealism, but it is an idealism fueled by naiveté and by an unrealistic sense of the balance of power in the world. In his championing of foreign aid, and his insistence that our aid programs not be used as a tool of political interest; in the unimpeachable faith he places in the efficacy of arms control; in the high standards of human rights he applies to some countries; and in his tireless pursuit of reconciliation with those hostile to us, Kennedy might appear an idealist. Yet his is an idealism that has been purchased at the cost of analytic clarity, that disregards the world's dangers and difficulties, and that underestimates what might be done by this country to counter them. Consider Kennedy's concept of America's five "vital interests":

1. Almost all Americans agree on the desirability of nuclear arms control. The really difficult questions concern Soviet intentions and their implications. A year after the signing of SALT I, Kennedy expressed the view that "the Soviet Union has a vested interest in a web of arms-control agreements which have been erected over the past decade. They know that this carefully balanced creation would fall to pieces at the first sign of a treaty violation." Yet even the State Department and others who have defended Soviet behavior under SALT acknowledge that it has been replete with ambiguities and has frequently probed the outer perimeter of the accord's restrictions.

In 1976, Kennedy commented on the U.S.-Soviet military balance that "the biggest canard of all is the charge that the Soviet Union is outspending us on defense." Here, too, reality instructs otherwise. The astronomical level of Soviet defense spending

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is taken by most observers to hold important implications for arms control. If the Soviets are deploying weapons much faster than the U.S. is doing (and are also trying to cheat), the possibility arises that they would hope to use arms-control agreements to lull the U.S. into complacency, while they pursue military advantage. Most supporters of SALT would acknowledge this as a danger against which the U.S. should remain vigilant. But Kennedy has taken the view that Soviet intentions don't matter! He said in 1974: "This need (and opportunity) to control the arms race has been important for us regardless of Moscow's motives and capabilities."

2. It is hard to see how Kennedy's proposal to limit U.S. security commitments abroad to Western Europe, Japan, and Israel would work, even assuming that it is desirable. What would the Israelis and the Europeans think of a security commitment which came attached to a declaration that the Indian Ocean, Africa, and the rest of the Middle East are outside the U.S. defense perimeter? What would they think of Kennedy's 1975 proposal to withdraw the small symbolic U.S. naval presence from the Persian Gulf so as not to provoke the Russians into a competition for influence in that area? How would Japan feel if the closest country to which the United States recognized a security commitment was Israel? The Japanese, the Europeans, the Israelis tend to believe—as do most other peoples—that their security is profoundly affected by events in neighboring areas. A U.S. policy which seeks to isolate three such narrow spheres of U.S. commitment is bound to alarm those who live within the spheres almost as much as those who are left outside of them.

3. Kennedy's prescription that the U.S. avoid "trying to manipulate physically the process of change in a complex and difficult world" seems to take no account of the fact that there are others busily trying to do just that—and to our disadvantage. If we have learned the wisdom of not seeing Communist machinations behind every manifestation of discontent in the world, are we now to accept as mere local discontent every effort of the Soviets to extend their empire? Perhaps the Sandinistas are true democrats and the armies of North Vietnam are nothing but the instruments of a quest for national independence. But if there are those quick to see a Soviet presence where there is insufficient evidence, Kennedy seems to have difficulty perceiving such a presence even where the evidence is more than ample, as when he wrote in *Decisions for a Decade* that "today, with the exception of East Germany, Russia has no more satellites."

4. Kennedy's call for a new "global economic compact" and his idea about foreign aid suggest an approach to poor countries which would increase the transfer of American wealth to these countries while decreasing efforts to exert American influence on them. Yet the failure of American foreign aid lies largely in our present inability to influence its recipients. The United States cannot provide enough charity to lift the world out of poverty. The answer to poverty lies in social and cultural changes which will enable poor countries to produce more wealth. The U.S. may not be able to create such changes in other countries, but it can certainly foster and encourage them: in any case, it is hard to understand who will be helped by an effort to guard against the exertion of American influence.

5. In his approach to human rights, Kennedy seems innocently hopeful about the benefits which will accrue from a U.S. reconciliation with Communist countries, as in his idea that with U.S. diplomatic recognition, Castro may release all political prisoners. He seems equally unrealistic about what may be gained from cracking down on allies, as with his suggestion that the cause of human rights would be helped by a termination of U.S. military aid to South Korea.

THE Kennedy presidential candidacy is based on a promise of strong, dynamic leadership, which the country surely wants. But leadership for what, and to what end? Kennedy's world view appears to foresee an America with more modest military strength, fewer commitments, a diminished interest in exerting influence abroad, and a reduced attachment to the defense of our own values. On the record, Kennedy stands for a partial withdrawal from the role of world leadership which the United States has played since World War II. It is very much an open question whether this is the direction in which Americans yearn to be boldly led.

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Jewish Denial and the Holocaust

Walter Laqueur

On April 5, 1943, Hershel Johnson, the United States Ambassador to Sweden, sent a cable to Washington in which he reported (on the authority of a former German consular officer) that of the 450,000 Jews in Warsaw, only 50,000 remained. The report was true, if somewhat belated—the events described had taken place some eight months earlier and had been widely noted in the world press. Johnson's cable is remarkable mainly for its last sentence: "So fantastic is the story told by this German eyewitness to his friend, my informant, that I hesitate to make it the subject of an official report."

It is difficult to understand Johnson's hesitancy. The year before, he had reported the destruction of Baltic, Ukrainian, and White Russian Jewry; why should he have been surprised that the same thing had now happened in Poland? But the syndrome was quite common. Few Americans, for example, were better informed about events in Nazi-occupied Europe than Allen Dulles, who represented the OSS in Berne. Yet one day in June 1944, Dulles received a report which "profoundly shocked" him. Two inmates of Auschwitz had succeeded in escaping to Slovakia; the long and detailed account they wrote of their experiences (which later became very famous and was widely circulated) was taken to Budapest, and from there by courier to Switzerland. The representative of the British news agency Exchange Telegraph gave a copy to Dulles, and registered the latter's shock upon reading it. "He was as disconcerted as I was and said: 'One had to do something immediately. . . .'" A cable was sent by Dulles to the Secretary of State the following day. There is no reason to believe his shock was not genuine.

Jews were as liable as non-Jews to disbelieve the information coming out of Europe. In 1943 Felix Frankfurter met with Jan Karski, a Polish emissary who reported to him about the mass slaughter in Eastern Europe. Frankfurter listened and then told Karski that he did not believe him. When Karski protested, Frankfurter explained that he did not mean Karski had spoken untruthfully, only that he could not believe the story—after all, there was a difference.

The question of what was known about the Holocaust and when, and of why the information was not believed, is one of the riddles that make understanding the catastrophe so difficult. The rejection of information which for one reason or another is unacceptable may well be a normal psychological mechanism, at least up to a point. But beyond that point, when the veracity of the information becomes incontrovertible, continued resistance to it becomes almost inexplicable—all the more so when the events concerned are not of marginal importance or occurring in some faraway country, but constitute mortal danger to the survival of one's people or oneself.

In what follows I shall be tracing how the news about the "Final Solution" become known, not so much to the world at large as to world Jewry, and how that news was received. I should note at the outset that in a study of this kind there are many pitfalls, above all the temptation of hindsight. Nothing is easier, so many years after the events, than to apportion praise and blame, or to claim that everyone should have known what was going to happen once fascism came to power. But such an approach is ahistorical. Nazism was an unprecedented phenomenon; with all the abominations of fascist Italy, during the twenty years of its existence some *twenty* enemies of the regime were actually executed, and a number of these had in fact engaged in "armed struggle." There was no precedent in modern European history for the murderous character of Nazism; little wonder, then, that most contemporaries were caught unprepared. Even what happened in Germany and Austria before 1939 could not be reasonably considered the logical prelude to genocide.

And yet, when all allowances have been made, it is also true that from a reconstruction of the events of 1942, few emerge unblemished. The story is one of failure—the failure of Jewish leaders and communities inside and outside Europe, and, of course, the failure of non-Jews in high positions in neutral and Allied countries who did

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not care, or did not want to know, or even suppressed information once it became available.

It is, in short, a story of relevance to our own day and age.

"World Jewry" is a term that has been frequently used by Jews, the friends of Jews, and the enemies of Jews; as a political reality it has never existed. When World War II broke out, the Jewish communities of the world were no more united than they had been in the past. The Zionists had their emissaries in non-occupied Europe, as did the various non-political aid and rescue organizations such as the Joint Distribution Committee (JDC); the Orthodox religious groups had their own small network, keeping their distance from the rest. There was no central body to collect and sift the news from Nazi-occupied Europe. Most Zionist leaders were in Palestine and almost wholly preoccupied with the dangers facing the Jewish community in that country. Some were in America, far away physically and psychologically from events in Europe; even Chaim Weizmann, who normally resided in London, was in the United States for most of 1941-42.

The only body in existence uniting several organizations was the World Jewish Congress (WJC), a voluntary association of representative Jewish communities and organizations founded (to quote its constitution) "to assure the survival and to foster the unity of the Jewish people." It had come into being in 1936 at a meeting in Geneva attended by delegates from 32 countries. Its president was Rabbi Stephen Wise, the elder statesman of American Jewry; Nahum Goldmann was the chairman of its executive board.

Wise was an influential figure in American domestic politics; he had been on close terms with President Wilson and was the one Jewish leader who could reach Roosevelt. He had attended the Versailles peace conference and spoken there on behalf of the rights of the Jews (and the Armenians). But while he was a man of great charm and moral force, a staunch fighter for many a good cause, his experience was basically in American affairs and there was in him a streak of naiveté.

Goldmann was different. He had met all the famous leaders of his time (and never made a secret of the fact). He was a man of the world *par excellence*, equally at home in Berlin and London, in Paris and New York. But with all his travels and talents as a diplomat of the old school, there was something suspect about his political judgment. In 1931 he had been instrumental in overthrowing Weizmann as leader of the world Zionist movement because Weizmann was too soft vis-à-vis the Arabs; in early 1933 he had assured German Jewish leaders that it was quite unthinkable that Britain and France would permit a takeover by Hitler. There were more such misjudgments, both before and after.

It was not at all clear why the two leading figures of the WJC should be in New York, far away from the scene of the tragedy. Wise obviously *had* to stay, in view of his many commitments and also because of his connections; Goldmann's place should therefore have been in London, as near as possible to the scene of events. It could be argued that politically Washington was infinitely more important than London, but London was a crucial listening post and also the obvious spot from which to launch political initiatives. Goldmann, however, apparently did not believe in the possibility of political action. In a speech in November 1941 he said that the problem of European Jewry was more one of relief than of politics. Political intervention would be of no value, he argued, since most of the governments concerned were practically puppet dependencies of Germany. This was a strange pronouncement from a man who more than anyone else was expected to take political action; indeed, the countries he mentioned specifically—Hungary, Rumania, and Bulgaria—were the very ones about which something could have been done. It was also quite inconsistent with declarations he had made earlier in the war when he had solemnly announced that unless immediate political intervention was attempted to save European Jewry, "our generation will be burdened with a terrible responsibility before Jewish history."

Thus, when the first news of the mass killings reached London in late 1941 and in 1942, all the leading figures of "world Jewry" were far away, and none was well informed. The British section of the WJC, where some of the early news was received, was headed by Eva Marchioness Reading, the daughter of Alfred Mond. A great lady of much public spirit and some political connections, she acted, needless to say, mainly as a figurehead. The secretaries of the London branch were Noah Barou and Alex Easterman, the former a specialist on cooperative finance. The head of the International Affairs Department of the WJC in New York was Maurice Perlzweig, whose training had been in the rabbinate; he was furthermore quite new to the job, having been transferred from London to New York in 1942. All these were competent and hardworking men, but they themselves would have been the first to admit that they were not equipped to cope with problems of such enormity which no one could have foreseen. Perhaps their most effective ally was Sidney Silverman, chairman of the British section of the WJC, a left-wing Labor member of Parliament, like Stephen Wise a somewhat naive man but a born fighter who intuitively seems to have understood that European Jewry was facing a disaster unparalleled in history and that one had to react quickly.

These were the main actors on the scene when the storm broke in the summer of 1942, with a cable sent to London by Gerhard Riegner of the WJC office in Geneva, reporting Hitler's decision to kill European Jewry.

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Sidney Silverman, in a telegram from London, informed Wise and Goldmann of the contents of Riegner's cable on August 24, 1942. On September 1, in another telegram signed Barou-Easterman, the London branch of the WJC wrote: "Suggest following urgent action: First, public declaration leading political religious other authorities in all free countries; second, press conference; third, you approach Vatican; four, we approach United Nations make formal categorical pronouncement etc. etc."*

In New York there *was* an inclination at first to go public, but then second and less sound counsels prevailed. It was decided that Rabbi Wise should turn to the State Department for advice. Had Washington heard anything about the subject and what kind of action did it suggest? Wise and Goldmann had in fact no real doubts about the authenticity of the reports; one of their fears was that publicity would only add to the feeling of despair among the prospective victims. But what help could they possibly expect from the State Department, which had tried to keep this information secret in the first place? Was it that they did not know how to react, and wanted to gain a little time? Or did they perhaps think there was a faint hope the news was wrong, or at least exaggerated after all?

The State Department, to do it justice, did in fact make some inquiries concerning information it had apparently received quite independently in early August. The Department now turned to the Vatican for *its* information, as in ancient times kings and rulers used to consult the Delphic oracle, and with similar results. Meanwhile, Jews were being killed in Auschwitz and Treblinka, Sobibor, Belzec, and Chelmno at the rate of 5,000 to 10,000 a day. But Wise and Goldmann had some reassurance for their colleagues in London: they had been told that the deportations from Warsaw were meant to supply labor for the building of fortifications on the Polish-Soviet border (this was apparently what Roosevelt had told Felix Frankfurter); one had to wait for the return of Myron Taylor, the U.S. envoy to the Vatican, and the timing had to be right. The State Department, in any event, was "deeply sympathetic and cooperative." "We urge postponement publicity until right effect producible [in] entire American press," was the content of another message by Goldmann, Wise, and Perlzweig to London. In another cable, on October 9, they announced "problem receiving consideration highest authorities whose guidance imperative." This last was quite simply false: neither the President nor the Secretary of State was giving consideration to the problem. Nor was it clear what waiting "until right effect producible" meant. True, it would have been most desirable if the U.S. government had officially confirmed the news from Geneva, joined the Jewish leaders in their protest, and suggested effective countermeasures. But how could anyone have expected even for a single moment that this was likely to happen?

In November, Under Secretary of State Sumner Welles summoned Stephen Wise to Washington and told him that the news from Europe was essentially true; but the question of whether the U.S. government would do anything about it was left open. Thus, on November 24, Stephen Wise called a press conference in which he announced that he had learned "through sources confirmed by the State Department" that half of European Jewry had been slain in an extermination campaign. The publication in any case could not have been delayed any longer. Two days earlier the Jewish Agency in Jerusalem had officially announced that the horrible news from Eastern Europe was indeed correct.

How had the news reached the Jewish organizations in the first place? Obviously it was not just a matter of one cable or one message. There had been dozens and hundreds of items, some seemingly reliable, others of doubtful provenance. It ought to be recalled that Nazi-occupied Europe was never hermetically sealed, and the news about the massacres of 1941 and of the deportations to the death camps in 1942 reached London and New York through many channels, including from newspapers in the occupied countries. True, the newspapers in the Reich hardly ever dealt with the subject, and the papers from Belgrade and Bratislava, from Cracow and Riga, did not mention it much more often. But from a careful reading of the press a certain pattern emerged which, at the very least, was enough to inspire grave fears. For if it was true that, as these papers announced, town after town—including some (such as Kishinev) with a pre-war Jewish population of 100,000 or more—had become empty of Jews (*judenrein*), if whole countries were being "purged," what had become of the Jews?

There was another source of information, utterly obvious and straightforward and therefore frequently forgotten: postcards and letters sent from Nazi-occupied countries to neutral places. Even from the ghettos such messages could be sent up to the end of 1942, and in many instances later. They took a week or two to reach Switzerland or Sweden, and not much longer to reach Spain and Turkey. Throughout the war, in addition, cables could be sent from Nazi-occupied Europe to Switzerland and Turkey, and vice versa. It was even possible to talk by phone; the Slovak Jewish leaders had frequent long-distance conversations with Zurich and Geneva.

Much information emanated from those who had escaped from the ghettos and death camps. Thousands of Jews went underground, hiding in cities or villages or forests or assuming non-Jewish iden-

* This cable was read by U.S. censorship and forwarded to the State Department. A note to Assistant Secretary of State A. A. Berle is affixed: "We will suppress if you approve."

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tities in order to live a "normal" life. There were escapes from Holland and France into Spain and Switzerland via the underground railway established by Joop Westerweel and Joachim Simon (Shushu) in Holland and by "Croustillon" and "Pierre Lacaze" in southern France. There were more or less fixed points at which the border-crossing took place—at Pau and Perpignan, near Oloron, and through Andorra. Many hundreds escaped this way from Nazi-occupied countries. Jews from the Polish ghettos fled both to the East (into the Soviet Union) and to the south, through Slovakia to Hungary. There were Jewish smugglers, taxi and truck owners at the Slovak-Polish border, whose help was invaluable; the guards on the Hungarian frontier could frequently be bought off. From Hungary some continued via Rumania to Turkey and onward to Palestine. (From 1942 on the Rumanian government no longer opposed emigration in principle; the main difficulty facing the Jews was that no country wanted to have them.) Jews from Croatia and southern France went into Italy, where they felt much safer for the time being. A group of Jewish agricultural pioneers rowed from the Danish island of Bornholm to Sweden; some tried to do the same from Holland to the United Kingdom. Jews with false papers even joined "Organization Todt," the Nazi labor service, were sent to various parts of Europe, and eventually escaped; a Polish Jew who had joined one of these labor battalions walked into Sweden from Norway. A few reached Sweden as stowaways from Baltic ports. A few young German Jews walked over the Swiss border in the middle of the war, a few dozen Greek Jews were taken out in old caiques by the Cairo branch of MI-9, headed by Lt. Col. Tony Simmonds, who had been with Wingate in Palestine in the 1930's.

Even at the time of a massacre some would get away. The *Einsatzgruppen* and their local assistants were in a hurry; there was so much work to be done. Some Jews pretended to be dead, and then, during the night, crawled away; others jumped from the cars or trains leading to the place of execution, or succeeded in hiding. Those who had miraculously been saved would try to reach the nearest remaining Jewish community, where they would report what they had witnessed.

Nor were the death camps themselves escape-proof. The first flights from Chelmno and Treblinka occurred within a few days after these camps began to operate. The most difficult to escape from was Belzec, but the place had been visited by Kurt Gerstein (the SS officer who tried to stop the mass murder) who talked about it to several German friends and foreign diplomats.

There were about 10 escapes from Sobibor before the revolt there and 60 during the fighting; a few dozen inmates fled Treblinka before the revolt and perhaps 20 during it. Auschwitz, the largest of the camps, had 667 escapees (of whom 270 were subsequently caught); in 1942 there were 120 escapes, the year after, 310. Among those who fled were at least 76 Jews. In his autobiographical notes Rudolf Hoess, the commandant of Auschwitz, wrote that it was virtually impossible to stop news from the outside world from reaching Auschwitz, and vice versa. When Himmler visited Auschwitz he complained about the "high, unprecedented numbers of successful escapes" and asked the commandant to use every possible means to put an end to them. But the escapes continued.

Some Auschwitz inmates were actually released by the German authorities. There were 952 releases during the first half of 1942, 26 during the subsequent six months, and some even in 1943. In early 1944 a considerable number of Jewish women were freed from the camp owing to the intervention of Oskar Schindler, a German who ran a factory in Cracow.

Those who had escaped from the camps had no reason to keep silent, and those legally released were also not greatly worried by the undertaking they had signed never to reveal anything. But if the ones who reached Warsaw were believed, there was much more skepticism in Western Europe and also in Hungary. The story of the two young Roman Catholics from Holland who were released from Auschwitz on May 12, 1942 is not untypical. One of them later told the historian Louis de Jong: "The worst thing was that you simply could not get through to those closest to you. That gave you a terrible sense of isolation, as if a steamroller was about to run you over. You felt like screaming it from all the housetops but knew it was just waste of your breath—no one would believe a word you told them." The year after, 1943, four women who were Jehovah's Witnesses returned from Auschwitz to Holland and faced the same reaction: "Most people refused to believe us." In many circles it was only in late 1943 and in 1944, with the evidence piling up from many sources, that the news about the camps was taken more seriously.

The idea of collecting and analyzing the testimony of escapees—whether or not that testimony was fully believed—occurred both to the Jewish Agency and to British Military Intelligence, and in late 1942 an institution with the innocent and rather vague name Inter Service Liaison Department (ISLD) was established under Colonel Teague in Haifa; the Jewish liaison officers were Reuben Zaslani (Shiloah) and Gideon Ruffer (Rafael). Interrogating recent arrivals from Europe, ISLD gathered much information of value, but the enterprise would have been of even greater value had it started earlier and had it not been limited to those who reached Palestine; debriefing by the Allies in Spain and Switzerland was no more than sporadic.

As for other news about the early stages of the "Final Solution," the Polish underground network known as Warsaw-London was the most important channel of communication. But there was another of equal, or almost equal, importance

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which led from groups of Zionists or individuals in occupied Europe to Geneva, and from there to the head offices of the Jewish Agency for Palestine in Jerusalem. Switzerland was a vital listening post on the continent, more so than in World War I when there had been other places, like Copenhagen and Amsterdam. The importance of Switzerland had not been foreseen by the Jewish institutions, and no special preparations had been made; the presence of Jewish emissaries in Geneva and Zurich was more or less accidental. Once the war broke out, and especially after the fall of France and Italy's entry into battle, Switzerland was almost entirely cut off; with the occupation of Vichy France by the Germans, the isolation became total. Communications were also affected; airmail from Switzerland to Palestine hardly ever took less than four weeks and frequently took longer. Sometimes important news would be transmitted by telegraph, but the relatively short messages would always raise further questions in the recipient's mind, followed by requests for details. And so the emissaries in Geneva got accustomed to writing long letters, which resulted in still further delays and misunderstandings.

THE senior Jewish representative in Switzerland was Richard Lichtheim, one of the early leaders and spokesmen of Zionism in Germany. Born to a wealthy Berlin family in 1885, he became, at the early age of twenty-eight, editor of *Die Welt*, the central organ of the world Zionist movement. During World War I he represented the Zionists in Turkey, engaging in various diplomatic missions and interceding on behalf of Palestinian Jewry, then suffering from the mistreatment of malevolent Turkish governors. After the war he was for a number of years a member of the World Zionist Executive in London. In 1925, opposing Weizmann's hesitant and "weak" line, he joined the Revisionists, but the extremism of Jabotinsky (and *a fortiori* of some of his younger followers) eventually repelled him, and ten years later he rejoined the main Zionist camp. The Zionist leadership was willing to employ him again, but not in a front-line position. Lichtheim had always been a little too independent in his judgment for the bureaucratic apparatus, he had never lived in Palestine for any length of time, and his command of Hebrew was uncertain, to say the least. As a German Jew he never quite fit into the closely-knit group of East Europeans who dominated Zionist politics. When he was sent to Geneva in 1939, no one realized how vital that city would be in the years to come, not in terms of policy-making but as a source of information.

In some ways Lichtheim was eminently suited to his assignment. Of all the Zionist leaders of his generation he had the surest grasp of world politics. He was widely read in recent European history and had followed international politics for three decades from a close angle. His analytical skill was impressive. He never had any illusions about Hitler's immoderate aims and mad ambitions, nor did he have any false hopes with regard to the response of the Western allies to the fascist dictators. His predictions about the course of the war and developments in the postwar period were remarkably accurate. True, his reports did not have a great impact back home in Jerusalem, but it is doubtful whether anyone else, even if more in tune with the Zionist leadership, would have been successful in explaining the grim realities of Nazi Europe.* .

As the war broke out, Lichtheim set up shop at 52 rue des Paquis—the Palais Wilson—and initiated a correspondence with Jerusalem which ranged from the fate of individuals to that of whole communities. His basic tenor was pessimistic, but it was not a pessimism that led to passivity. He had suggestions for saving at least some of the Jews of Europe and he repeated them relentlessly—without much success. In a letter written after the fall of France he mentioned the existence of a "specific office dealing with the solution of the Jewish Question"—Eichmann's department in the State Main Security Office. Others were to discover this more than two years later, but at the time the "Final Solution" had not yet been put on the agenda; the Nazis were planning "radical emigration" and settlement in Madagascar. "What will become of the Jews of Europe?" Lichtheim asked as 1940 drew to its close:

> I feel that a word of warning to the happier Jews of England and America is necessary. It is impossible to believe that any power on earth will be able (and willing?) to restore to the Jews of Continental Europe what they have lost or are losing today. It is one of the superficial beliefs of a certain type of American and British Jew that after Great Britain's victory—for which, of course, the Jews all over the world are praying—everything will be all right again with the Jews of Europe. But even if their civil rights can be restored, what about the property confiscated, the shops looted, the practices of doctors and lawyers gone, the schools destroyed, the commercial undertakings of every description closed or sold or stolen? Who will restore all that and how? . . . And what will be left of the Jews of Europe? I am not speaking of the hundreds of thousands who during these years of persecution have managed to escape and are now trying to build up a new life in Palestine, in the USA, in South America, Australia, San Domingo, or elsewhere. There are the refugees in Europe who tried to escape but did not go fast and far enough. . . . What will become of them after the war?

As Lichtheim saw it, there would be a mass of several hundreds of thousands after the war in a "permanent no-man's land, drifting from one

* The following is based on the Lichtheim correspondence kept in the Central Zionist Archives in Jerusalem. I knew Richard Lichtheim through his son, George, and in the late 1940's, when he was living in Jerusalem, I discussed with him the work he had done in Geneva.

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frontier to another, from concentration camps to labor camps, from there to some unknown country and destiny." It was a remarkably accurate forecast—even though, when he wrote about "an ocean of blood and misery" Lichtheim did not believe that millions would be killed. Today his predictions may appear unduly optimistic; among his contemporaries they were considered examples of unwarranted despondency.

The situation was rapidly changing for the worse. After the Nazi invasion of Yugoslavia and the establishment of the fascist Ustasha state in Croatia, the plight of the Jews there became "desperate," Lichtheim wrote. There was no reaction from Jerusalem. Later in 1941, Lichtheim reviewed the deportations from Germany, Austria, and the Protectorate. Jews from German cities were being concentrated in Berlin, others had been deported to Poland or other Eastern European countries. Similar expulsion orders had been given in Vienna and Prague. So far, no information had been received to indicate that anything untoward had happened to those deported to Eastern Europe, and the ones remaining behind were employed in German war industries. On the whole, everything considered, the picture seemed to be not too bad. Some Jews had been arrested but few people had been actually killed in Germany. Yet Lichtheim had dark forebodings. He concluded his report as follows:

> With all these degradations added to actual starvation and brutal treatment, the remnants of the Jewish communities of Germany, Austria, and Czechoslovakia will probably be destroyed before the war ends and not too many will survive.

In November 1941, before the mass deportations and the death camps, Lichtheim again ended a dispatch on a solemn note:

> With regard to Germany, Austria, and the Protectorate it must be said that the fate of the Jews is now sealed. . . . Generally speaking, this whole chapter bears the title: "Too late." There was a time when the U.S. and the other American states could have helped by granting visas. But this was obstructed by the usual inertia of the bureaucratic machine and by red tape.

Was there anything that could still be done to help? Lichtheim noted that America still had some influence with Vichy and could make use of it. At least some of the persecuted Jews in France could be rescued in this way. He returned to this point in another letter, sent to Weizmann. Again he stressed that the fate of the majority of European Jewry was sealed. Of those deported to the East only a minority of the younger and stronger would survive. The whole policy of deportation to the devastated towns of Western Russia in the middle of the winter was "murder combined with torture." The Red Cross had been informed, but what could it do against the will of the Gestapo? He transmitted the most recent information received in Geneva and then noted:

> It is a curious thing that President Roosevelt never mentioned the Jews whenever he spoke of the oppressed nations. The governments of the democracies may have been led to believe that there would be still more terrible persecutions if they mentioned the Jews in their speeches. I think this to be a mistake. Events have shown that the Jews could not have suffered more than they have suffered if the statesmen of the democracies would have said the word.

But perhaps there was another motive; perhaps they wanted to avoid the impression that the war had anything to do with the Jews. In that case, "Great Britain and America should say: We are neither Jews nor do we wage war for the Jews—we are battling for mankind against the enemy of mankind."

Where, Lichtheim asked, were the voices condemning the atrocities and warning the perpetrators "*that they will be held responsible*" (emphasis in the original)? Lichtheim thought that in some cases, such as Rumania, Hungary, Slovakia, Croatia, and Vichy, such a warning might have had, and "*might still have*," a deterrent effect. Germany was of course a much more difficult case, but even there some persons or circles might be influenced. There was no answer to the questions raised by Lichtheim.

In the winter of 1941 the Nazi war machine suffered its first major setback in the Soviet Union. Lichtheim noted the enormous losses, but was scornful of the rumors that the generals would take over and force Hitler into the background. As for the situation of the Jews, the picture was getting gloomier and gloomier. From a letter in February 1942 to Arthur Lourie, the head of the emergency committee in New York:

> The number of our dead after this war will have to be counted not in thousands or hundreds of thousands but in several millions, and it is difficult to imagine how the surviving will ever be able to return to a normal way of life.

If anything, Lichtheim understated the magnitude of the catastrophe. Yet at the time his gloomy predictions were the exception: in February 1942 no one wanted to hear of millions of victims.

But Lichtheim stuck to his theme: the measures that could and should be taken to slow the tide of persecution. He repeatedly emphasized the need for public, formal protests and warnings by Allied leaders, and urged approaches to the Catholic Church. In March 1942, together with Riegner and Sally Mayer, the president of the Swiss Jewish community, he met Monsignor Bernardini, the Papal Nuncio in Switzerland, and handed him a detailed report about the situation of the Jews. The Nuncio stated that he was aware of the unfortunate situation and had already reported it to

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Rome, but that he would do so again and recommend certain specific steps. Soon afterward, Lichtheim sadly noted that the efforts of the Vatican in Slovakia had been of no avail.

While Lichtheim watched the slow destruction of European Jewry he was told of plans made by notables in Jerusalem to reestablish their organizations in Europe after the war. For this kind of "postwar planning" he had nothing but scorn:

> My personal prognosis is quite somber. Those Jews still alive after the war will be engulfed by Russia and the neighboring countries. I do not share the optimism of those who expect the toleration—let alone the support—of Zionism by Bolshevism. The remnants of European Jewry will have to look somehow for an existence overseas.

The mass killings in Poland were first made public in the world press in late June 1942. At this time, Lichtheim reported that Central Europe was to be made *judenrein* by means of deportation and direct or indirect killing "through starvation or even shorter methods."

> The Jews in almost all countries of this tormented continent live only in the fear of deportation which aims at their physical destruction quickly or over a longer period, or fear of slave labor in intolerable conditions. Their only thought is toward rescue and escape, but this will be possible only in a very few cases.

IN August 1942 an English friend sent Lichtheim a report of a debate in the House of Commons earlier that month about postwar problems of resettlement. One speaker had said 7 million Jews would need homes after the war; another mentioned the figure of 9½ million. Lichtheim wrote bitterly in reply: "People in England do not know what is now going on in Europe." How could even Jewish leaders believe that 5 or 6 million Jews would remain after the war to be resettled? After analyzing the figures Lichtheim stated categorically, "We now know that deportation means death—sooner or later."

> Of the former Polish, German, Austrian, Czechoslovak, Yugoslavian Jews—altogether 3½ million—and of the others who have been or will be deported, very few will survive. . . . This process of annihilation is going on relentlessly and there is no hope left to save any considerable number. . . . Therefore it is no exaggeration to say that Hitler had killed or is killing 4 million Jews in Continental Europe and that no more than 2 million have a chance of surviving. With every month that passes this chance becomes smaller and one year hence even these figures may appear too optimistic.

Meanwhile (on August 15, 1942), Lichtheim had dictated a report based on the account of two eyewitnesses who had come directly from Poland, one of them a non-Jew, "a very reliable and well known personality." Both had stories to relate that were, as Lichtheim wrote in an accompanying letter, "so terrible that I had some doubts whether I should forward it or not." (He kept the report for two weeks before mailing it.) The report, which was also sent to Stephen Wise and was intercepted by the State Department, dealt with the mass killings of the Jews in Warsaw, Lithuania, and elsewhere, and mentioned Belzec as well as the fact that Theresienstadt, the showplace in the Protectorate, was merely an interim station for most of the deportees. The report dwelled upon the death trains and the role of the Lithuanian helpers of the SS; it also stated that no Jews were left in the regions east of Warsaw. There were some incorrect statements in the report, such as the allegation that the corpses of victims were used for fat and fertilizers, and that the whole non-Jewish population of Sevastopol had been killed. But by and large it gave an unvarnished picture of the situation—as Lichtheim pointed out in his comments. Certain facts, he said, had been confirmed quite independently by other sources:

> All this gives a most sinister meaning to the other information contained in this report—incredible as it may seem to readers in England and America. In fact, I believe the report to be true and quite in line with Hitler's announcement that at the end of this war there will be no Jews in Continental Europe.

The report met with disbelief not only in England and America but also in Jerusalem. Yitzhak Gruenbaum, one of the leading figures of Polish Jewry and a member of the Jewish Agency Executive, sent Lichtheim a cable in reply:

> Shocked your latest reports regarding Poland which despite all difficult [to] believe stop haven't yet published do everything possible verify cable.

Gruenbaum did try to ascertain whether the report was true. He sent a cable to Rabbi Marcus Ehrenpreis in Stockholm; had the venerable rabbi heard anything about it? Ehrenpreis, in his middle seventies at the time, a prolific author and one of the pioneers of modern Hebrew literature, was one of the most unlikely authorities on current events in Eastern Europe, and was unwilling to make any effort to find out. Leo Lauterbach, head of the Zionist Organization Department, was somewhat more cautious in his reply to Lichtheim:

> Frankly, I am not inclined to accept all the statements at their face value and without having, of course, any evidence to the contrary have great doubts as to the accuracy of all the facts contained therein. . . . One must also learn from experience to distinguish between reality, grim as it is, and figments of an imagination strained by justified fear and which grows to believe what is whispered without being able, in the circumstances, to check its veracity.

But then he added that "without going into gruesome details" one could not help accepting the main facts and interpretation as contained in Lichtheim's letter. What emerged from Lauter-

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bach's confused response was that while Jerusalem was by now persuaded that the situation was very bad, it did seem not quite as bad as Lichtheim described it.

DURING the following days and weeks more evidence came to light in quick succession. On September 26, Lichtheim cabled London that the ghettos of Warsaw and Lodz were nearly empty, with the majority of the population deported to some unknown destination. On September 29, in a letter to Arthur Lourie in New York: "The total destruction of the Jewish communities in Belgium and Holland is nearly complete." On September 15, in a letter to London, again reiterating his old complaint: "Far too little has been said and done by the Allies to warn the Nazis and their satellites of the consequences of their crime." Now, however, with the turn of the tide in the war, prospects were better than they had been ever before. He warned that unless action were taken, the remaining Jewish communities in Europe, i.e., the 800,000 in Hungary and the 300,000 in Rumania, would also perish.

On October 5, Lichtheim sent to Jerusalem (and to London and New York) "a most harrowing report about the situation in Lettland." For a long time there had been sporadic news about the slaughter in the Baltic countries, which had, in fact, taken place a year earlier. But it had been very difficult to obtain reliable reports; there was no correspondence with Vilna and Riga and very little traffic. The "harrowing report" was based on the evidence of Gabriel Zivian, a young Jew from Riga, who had witnessed the massacres on the spot, made his way to northern Germany, and worked as a hospital aide in Stettin. Miraculously, he had received an entry visa to Switzerland through some relations in Geneva. Riegner interviewed him like an examining magistrate (Riegner's words) for eight hours. This was in August 1942; a little later, another young Jew of Polish origin also reached Switzerland illegally. Since he was quite ill, he could not be sent back to Germany but was hospitalized under police supervision. A physician called Riegner: they had a patient who was telling horrible stories. Could Riegner possibly come and find out whether there was anything to this?

Lichtheim forwarded this account and said in an accompanying note: "We have heard from other sources of similar mass murders in Poland." Then, on October 8, he prepared a detailed reply to Gruenbaum, who had doubted the veracity of his earlier reports. "I can easily understand that you are unwilling to believe the report in question." But the sources were trustworthy. How could one possibly investigate the matter on the spot? No observers were permitted to approach the regions of death. The only available testimony was that of German officers returning from the East. But there had also been letters and postcards from Jews in Poland, and there could no longer be any doubt as to the intentions of Hitler and the Gestapo. He ended the letter as follows:

> I foresaw this development long ago. In my letters to London and New York I have constantly warned our friends of what was coming and I have submitted certain proposals. But I always knew that in the case of Hitler, nothing we or others would do or say could stop him. Therefore I have asked our friends in London and New York to try to save at least the Jewish communities in the semi-independent states of Rumania, Hungary, Italy, and Bulgaria. . . .
>
> But we have to face the fact that the large majority of the Jewish communities in Hitler-dominated Europe are doomed. There is no force which could stop Hitler or his SS who are today the absolute rulers of Germany and the occupied countries. It is my painful duty to tell you what I know. There is nothing I could add. The tragedy is too great for words.

THE correspondence with Jerusalem continued. There were more facts, but they hardly affected the general picture. On October 16, in a private letter to Lauterbach:

> I have the impression that my previous reports have not always found the necessary understanding. Some of our friends did not want to believe that something like this can happen, others may have been misled through different (i.e., less alarming) reports. It is pointless to deal now with the motives which have caused this. Events speak an inexorable language and we face these events impotently, or almost so. . . .

On October 20, he wrote another long summary of recent events. The deportations to Poland and inside Poland, he stated, had nothing to do with the Nazi war effort or the need for more labor. "There is a plan behind these measures to exterminate immediately the largest possible number of Jews." Previously there had been pogroms and mass executions, but they had been of a local character, and it had been thought that despite everything—despite slave labor, starvation, and all the other deprivations—at least the younger and stronger might survive and some communities would not be completely destroyed:

> But it has become more and more evident in the course of the last three or four months (and you will have seen this from my reports) that even this outlook was too optimistic and the latest deportation measures have made it quite clear what is contemplated.

Lichtheim then mentioned reports according to which there had been discussions in Hitler's headquarters about the complete annihilation of the Jews within the next few months. At the end of July, Hitler had signed a formal order approving a plan of total extermination. Reliable witnesses had seen the order signed by Hitler in his headquarters. Lichtheim concluded, for once in a spirit of complete resignation:

For the large majority of the Jews of Europe

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there seems to be no hope left. They are in the hands of a raving madman who has become the absolute ruler of Continental Europe by the will of his own guilty people and by the tragic blindness of statesmen who from 1933 to 1939 have tried to make a deal with the devil instead of driving him out while there was still time to do so.

Five weeks later, on November 25, at a meeting in Tel Aviv, Eliyahu Dobkin of the Jewish Agency Executive said, "Perhaps we have sinned as the first terrible news came to us two months ago via Geneva and Istanbul and we did not believe it." This sentiment was echoed by many others in the following weeks. But the information had, of course, arrived much earlier. It now remains to be asked, what prevented its acceptance in the first place, and what caused the reappraisal in November 1942?

WHEN the war broke out, more than half-a-million Jews were living in Palestine. Most of them had been born in the countries occupied by Nazi Germany, and most had friends and family in Europe with whom they tried to keep in touch through postcards and letters sent by way of neutral countries or short "Red Cross letters" (special forms in which messages of up to twenty-five words could be transmitted). In the beginning many such letters and postcards came, then fewer and fewer. Thus the public in Palestine came to depend for its information mainly on newspaper reports. Correspondents systematically picked up news of Jewish interest from papers in Nazi-occupied Europe, from the Swedish and Swiss press, and of course also from the infrequent reports in the British, American, and Soviet media.

But just as the Jewish Agency Executive thought that Lichtheim was exaggerating, and just as the reports by Riegner and others were thought to be unduly pessimistic, the Palestinian Jewish press quite frequently dissociated itself editorially from the alarmist information published in its own columns. A few examples should suffice. Moshe Prager, a Polish Jewish journalist, was the author (in 1941) of the first, and for the time being the only, book on the life of Polish Jewry under Nazi occupation. In his preface, Yitzhak Gruenbaum praised the supreme ability of Polish Jewry to adjust itself to the Nazi horrors, and predicted that its spirit would triumph over degradation, torture, and destruction. Prager himself saw the main Nazi aim as one of turning the Jews into despicable beggars; as for the Jews, they were fighting with their last efforts to keep their honor and not be defeated.

Terms like adjustment, triumph, honor, and defeat are of course singularly inept expressions in connection with the "Final Solution." But these comments were made in 1941, and at the time they seemed not altogether unreasonable. What happened in Eastern Europe in 1940 had, after all, occurred before in Jewish history: Jews had been deprived of their elementary rights, there had been sporadic pogroms and economic ruin. There seemed no reason to doubt that the great majority of European Jewry would survive the war. Thus, correspondents and commentators debated whether the Nazi plan to concentrate the Jews in the Lublin area was really all that terrible (because self-government had its advantages) or whether the scheme was just a fraud which would result in one giant concentration camp (as the New York *Jewish Daily Forward* reasoned).

But there was to be no concentration in the Lublin region, no resettlement scheme. After the invasion of the Soviet Union, the information received no longer spoke of the closing of businesses and the violation of human rights, not even of hunger and disease. It spoke of mass murder. But the perceptions which had been formed in an earlier period did not change. As the press saw it, Jewish life continued in Eastern Europe, albeit under very difficult conditions. There was a frantic search for rays of hope. Thus, the left-wing press reported with satisfaction that the agricultural training centers in Poland and other countries in which *halutzim* (pioneers) were preparing themselves for life in Palestinian collective settlements continued to operate. Orthodox newspapers noted with equal satisfaction that 24 Jewish bookshops were still open in the Warsaw ghetto, and three in Cracow. *Ha'olam*, the organ of the world Zionist movement, published virtually no news about the massacres during the first half of 1942; it did, however, feature an article by Apollinari Hartglass, a Polish Jewish leader who had escaped from Warsaw after the Nazi invasion and who tried to prove that although the world had initially ignored the Jewish catastrophe, now that it had discovered its propagandistic uses it was "actually exaggerating it twofold and more." Other Hebrew newspapers reported that Amsterdam was to be the embarkation point of European Jewry for some unknown destination overseas; another paper quoted a Polish professor who had fled to America to the effect that while the Jews would merely be deported, the Poles would all be killed by the Nazis.

Although massacres were reported in the papers, so was every rumor, however incredible, and unlimited scope was given to wishful thinking, and unwittingly to Nazi disinformation. And even when news of the massacres was printed it was widely doubled. *Hatzofeh* called correspondents to order in March 1942; they should show greater responsibility and not "inflate out of proportion every bad rumor." *Davar* editorialized that one should treat with caution the atrocity stories coming from "soldiers returning from the front." Both *Davar* and *Hatzofeh* put the blame on sensation-mongering journalists on the one hand and competition among news agencies on the other. "The irresponsible informants . . . absorb every rumor, they desperately look for every piece of bad news,

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every enormous figure, and present it to the reader in a way which makes the blood curdle in one's veins. . . ."*

When, in later years, people in Palestine sought to explain the ongoing misinterpretation—not to put it any more strongly—of the news from Europe, some pointed to mitigating circumstances. The summer of 1942 saw Rommel's advance into Egypt; the Africa Corps was poised to strike at Egypt, a German invasion of Palestine seemed at hand. It was only in the first week of September 1942 that Rommel was checked at Alam Halfa; and Montgomery's counteroffensive, which broke German dreams in Africa, did not begin until October 23. Up to that date the Jewish community in Palestine seemed in immediate danger, and all other problems were bound to take second place. Yet this hardly explains the lack of interest or understanding shown *before* Rommel's advance during the summer. And it certainly does not explain the lack of understanding shown by American and British Jewry.

It was not, in the final analysis, a matter of information or the lack of it. As a labor leader was to put it, "The community read and heard but did not absorb; and it did not raise its voice to alarm Jewish communities elsewhere." After November 1942 there were many voices raised in self-accusation, and there was much recrimination against the leadership which had, after all, had more information at its disposal and yet had not sounded the tocsin.

The leadership had indeed known more. On April 17, 1942, Moshe Shertok, the head of the Zionist Political Department, addressed Sir Claude Auchinleck (commander of the Eighth Army in North Africa and Montgomery's predecessor) as follows:

> There can be little doubt that if Palestine were overrun by the Nazis nothing less than complete annihilation would be the lot of the Jews of this country. The destruction of the Jewish race is a fundamental tenet of the Nazi doctrine. The authoritative reports recently published show that that policy is being carried out with a ruthlessness which defies description. Hundreds of thousands of Jews have perished in Poland, the Balkan countries, Rumania, and the invaded provinces of Russia, as a result of mass executions, forced deportations, and the spread of famine and disease in ghettos and concentration camps. An even swifter destruction, it must be feared, would overtake the Jews of Palestine, were they to fall under Nazi sway. . . .

These were strong words, written, moreover, well before the revelations of the Polish government-in-exile. Why, then, did the Jewish Agency disbelieve Lichtheim? The answer is that everything Shertok had said could also be found in the newspapers at the time, and also was not fully believed. Shertok's alarming words have to be read, furthermore, in the context in which they were written: the Jewish community of Palestine was in *immediate* danger, and in his letter Shertok pressed specific demands for the defense of Palestine—more Jewish soldiers, more arms, a large-scale program of military training, the expansion of the militia. To reinforce these demands Shertok invoked not only the military threat posed by Rommel (which was quite real) but also the news about large-scale persecutions in Europe which had been reported countless times but which were nevertheless more distant and probably only half-believed.

Another example of the confusion then prevailing: at the time Shertok addressed his letter to Auchinleck, the Zionist leader Melech Neustadt (Noi) was on a mission in Istanbul; in May 1942 he returned to Palestine and in two long addresses in closed session gave the most detailed and authoritative account then available to the Jewish leadership. There was no one better informed at the time: Noi had established contact, from Turkey, with fifty Jewish communities in Poland and with virtually every other European country. He had discovered, much to his surprise, that with certain exceptions (the Baltic countries and Eastern Poland) communication could easily be established.

The bad news was the fate of Croatian and part of Rumanian Jewry, of which Noi was fully informed. There had been victims in Eastern Galicia, and Lodz was more or less cut off from the outside world. It had been learned that "unproductive elements" had been deported from Lodz to Minsk, Kovno, and Riga. Noi said it was pointless to comment on the rumors concerning the fate of the Jews of Eastern Poland (and the Baltic countries); one simply did not know. But he also said that nothing was more harmful than "exaggerated information" which weakened and even put into doubt correct news about real atrocities. The good news was that all over Europe Jewish life continued, and that the Zionist youth movement was still active under very difficult conditions.

Noi's information was in part amazingly detailed. He had exact figures on hospitals and orphanages in Warsaw, the price of bread in various ghettos, and the number of participants in sundry agricultural courses. Some of it was also very recent: he knew about the unsuccessful intervention of the Vatican in Slovakia. His prediction was that, while the Nazis wanted physically to destroy the Jews, they also wanted to employ them for the war effort: "and it is possible that this will save a great part of European Jewry."

Which was more striking in these reports, the measure of knowledge or the measure of ignorance? The mass killings in the former Soviet territories had been reported in the press many months earlier, and Polish sources had confirmed the destruction of most communities in Lithuania

* These and other examples can be found in Yoav Gelber's study, *The Response of Palestinian Jewry to News of the European Holocaust 1942-43* (Hebrew), published so far only in part.

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and Eastern Galicia. But as seen from Istanbul these were still "rumors": silence did not necessarily mean death but perhaps only isolation.

LATER it was argued that certain Jewish leaders in the United States as well as in Palestine delayed the publication of the full truth about the European tragedy because they feared it would have a depressing, perhaps even a paralyzing, effect on the morale of the Jewish community in Palestine at a time of emergency. But explanations of this kind are more than dubious. Internal evidence shows that many Jewish leaders were genuinely skeptical with regard to the extent of the catastrophe until November 18-19, when four of them went to interview a group of Jewish women and children of Palestinian nationality who had just arrived from Europe.

They had been exchanged for a group of German nationals who had been detained at the beginning of the war on Allied territory. A first such exchange had taken place in December 1941, involving some 46 women and children. But no one had paid much attention at the time, and the arrivals had apparently little of interest to tell: they had not come from the Baltic countries or Western Russia where most of the massacres had taken place. Then came the second group, which would be followed by a third, much smaller, contingent in February 1943 and some further exchanges in the summer of 1944, mainly via Spain.

The November 1942 group of 137 was permitted to leave Poland on October 28, and Vienna (where they were kept for a few days prior to their departure) on November 11. On November 14, their train arrived at the Syrian border. Among them were 78 Jews (10 elderly men, 39 women, and 29 children) and of these 69 were Palestinian citizens. After a cursory interrogation by British military intelligence they were taken to Athlit, which had once been a British military camp (and also a detention center) some miles south of Haifa, near the sea. It was there that two members of the Jewish Agency Executive and two senior officials visited them.

The new arrivals came from thirteen different cities in Poland, from Berlin and Hamburg, from Belgium and Holland. They had also had the opportunity to meet in Vienna with the head of the Jewish community and his deputy, who told them that 400 Jews were left out of a community of 200,000. While most of the women had been held for some weeks in various prisons in Poland prior to their departure, they were able to move about more or less freely in Vienna. Thus they could provide a fairly comprehensive picture of the situation not only in Poland but also in other parts of Europe.

But were they reliable? The visitors from Jerusalem seem to have been quite skeptical at first. So often before, simple-minded (and even not-so-simple-minded) people had just repeated rumors often baseless in character. But the new arrivals could not be so easily dismissed. Among them was a scientific researcher at the Hebrew University, two members of Kibbutz Degania B (members, that is, of the Palestinian elite), a Zionist leader of long standing, and other such witnesses.

Eliyahu Dobkin, one of the visiting officials, summarized his findings in an address to the Histadrut Executive on November 25, 1942; similar reports were delivered to the leading bodies of the Jewish Agency and Mapai, the Labor party. "As I was sitting in Athlit and listening to the stories of tens of women it became clear to me that however great the sorrow, there remains no doubt and we have to accept it. Perhaps we sinned when we did not believe the first news which came via Geneva and Istanbul two months ago." What emerged from these accounts was, first, that a German government commission had been set up earlier in the summer under a certain commissar Feu or Fay to destroy Polish Jewry.* Furthermore, Dobkin continued, the majority of Polish Jewry had already been deported or was about to be deported. Among those who had arrived there was no one from Warsaw, the biggest ghetto, but they had met in (Polish) Upper Silesia some Jews who had escaped from Warsaw and who told them that only 40,000 Jews remained in the capital. (There were in fact still 60-70,000.) Of 40,000 Jews in Czestochow only 2,000 were still there; of 20,000 in Piotrkov only 2,600; of 30,000 in Kielce—1,500. There was a general picture of murder and ruin. They had not been able to extract from those interviewed information about the fate of the deported. They had been sent in an "unknown direction" and there was no news from them, no letters, no personal regards.

What did it all mean? There were various rumors in Poland and they were apparently correct: some big concrete structures had been put up near the Russian-Polish border in which the victims were killed by poison gas and burned. (This referred apparently to Sobibor, which was near the Russian border.) On the other hand, a woman from Oswiecim (Auschwitz) had told a story about three stoves for burning Jews which had been put up in a camp near that city.†

* This information was, in fact, wrong or at the very least inaccurate. There was no "special committee"; a regular department had been instituted in the main State Security Office several years earlier. "Operation Reinhard," in honor of the late Reinhard Heydrich who had been shot in Prague, was to exterminate Polish Jewry; it was under the command of Odilo Globocnik. Paradoxically, these inaccurate details had a greater impact on the Jewish leadership and public than the previous, more accurate reports. Up till now they had thought in terms of pogroms rather than systematic destruction, but if a special commission had been appointed, this shed new light on the character and the purpose of the persecutions.

† There were no Jews in the city of Auschwitz; the witness was in fact from nearby Sosnowiec. She said that two more chimneys were now built; from time to time Jews from the neighborhood were brought to the camps. Other new arrivals mentioned Belzec and Treblinka.

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Above all, there was the systematic murder of children and elderly people. Dobkin said he would never forget the story of an eight-year-old boy who had been hiding with his five-year-old sister in the house when the police came to collect them. He had warned the little girl not to make a sound, but, overcome by fear, she had cried, was found, and was taken away—one story out of hundreds of thousands.

What also emerged from these accounts was that the campaign of destruction had affected other countries besides Poland—Germany and Austria, Slovakia, Yugoslovia, and Holland. No country under Nazi rule had been spared. In all of Germany only 28,000 Jews were now left (the actual number was nearer 50,000) and there were even fewer in Austria.

THE representatives of Palestine Jewry who listened to the speech and read the evidence that had been submitted to them were, of course, deeply shocked. It had been one thing to reject the impersonal news in the paper or on the radio, based perhaps on doubtful informants. It was impossible not to accept the personal evidence of witness after witness. And those listening to the reports and reading the evidence asked themselves, in the words of one of them: "Is it possible that such authentic news did not reach America? I heard from Ben-Gurion [who was in the U.S. at the time] that they had heard the shocking news even before we did." Dobkin: "The news reached us and America via Geneva. But from the way people reacted here I can well imagine how they reacted over there. When we got the information many could not believe in its authenticity. Ben-Gurion says that in America they thought this was one of the methods of atrocity propaganda. We now have to make American Jewry understand that the information is indeed correct." There was great pressure to act immediately. As one of the participants said, "Three days have already passed." Three days!

On November 22, 1942 the Jewish Agency Executive published an announcement: news had been received from "authoritative and reliable sources" that the Nazis had started a systematic extermination campaign in Poland. During a three-day period, expression was to be given to the feeling of the community and the conscience of the world was to be aroused. There were demonstrations, meetings, speeches; the newspapers appeared with a black frame around the front page. Emergency and rescue committees were set up, emissaries were sent to Constantinople and other places to try and reach the Jews in occupied Europe; the idea of sending parachutists was discussed for the first time. But, as the U.S. Consul General in Jerusalem wrote in a cable to Washington, the feeling was one of tragic impotence—what could Palestinian Jewry possibly do to provide effective help?

From late November 1942 the subject of the Holocaust was to preoccupy the Jewish communities in America, in Palestine, and in Britain without interruption. But even now the full extent of the disaster had not altogether registered: Jewish organizations in America and elsewhere continued to publish declarations about Jewish life in the ghettos that stressed the continuing proud stand of the Jewish masses. Zionists, including leaders of the World Jewish Congress, became absorbed in "postwar planning" and paid little more than ceremonious attention to what was happening in Europe—"in stark contrast," as the historian Yehuda Bauer has pointed out, "to the outcries from Geneva and Istanbul demanding immediate action to save the remnants."

IN LATER years, Gerhard Riegner noted how bewildered he and his colleagues in Geneva had been by the inability of the Jewish leadership abroad to understand both the extent and the speed of the destruction. It spoke of 2 million victims when in fact 4 million had already died. The Institute of Jewish Affairs in New York published a study with figures which were altogether inexact and which then appeared in the European press. The New York Rescue Committee sent out lists of thousands of Polish Jews to whom parcels should be dispatched when neither the recipients nor the addressees any longer existed. "We [in Geneva] had the impression that they no longer understood what was happening. Their attitude can be explained by optimism and the incapacity to accept the worst. For us this was simply incomprehensible."

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The Politics of John Paul II

Michael Novak

THERE are many grounds for disagreement with some of the statements made by Pope John Paul II during his spectacular visit to the United States in early October, but it is difficult to deny the extraordinary spiritual presence of the man. As a Catholic and as a Slav, I was perhaps unusually moved by his passage through the land. He did not hesitate to say No where Yes would have been popular and his No seemed to issue from lived experience rather than rigid doctrine. The ancient word for grace—the presence of God shining through ordinary acts—is *charis*, from which Max Weber derived his "charismatic leadership." The Pope, I thought, had charisma in the ancient more than in the Weberian sense. Many witnesses, even when they did not agree with his words, honored his person or, more profoundly perhaps, the God of all, to Whom everything about him aimed to draw attention.

In one sense, the Pope's visit to America seemed to be of the utmost intellectual importance. In sophisticated America as in Mexico and Poland he has shown that there are enormous spiritual and moral energies at work. The peoples of the world are far more religious than any of our public forms or public leaders seem able to express, and more than thin theories of "secularization" seem able to describe. The worldwide stirring of the human spirit by this pilgrim's progress may thus have incalculable consequences.

In Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Des Moines, and Chicago, Pope John Paul II paid lavish tribute to the culture, spiritual values, and moral ideals of American civilization. This was a turning point. For generations, the Popes have been most reserved in their comments about America, and the Vatican bureaucracy has been even more so. All the prejudices of European intellectuals against American civilization have thrived there. In addition, Roman Catholic theology has long regarded America (and Great Britain) as particularly Protestant, utilitarian, materialist, individualistic, and as the very homeland of psychological egoism. No Pope ever praised American liberties as Pope John Paul II did at Battery Park. No Pope has ever grasped as eloquently and in such detail the spiritual integrity of American institutions as Pope John Paul II did at the White House. When he chided Americans for consumerism and materialism, he was voicing traditional papal judgments, but when he praised America (as when he recited in his unforgettable accent, "America, America, God shed His grace on thee . . ."), he sounded a new note in Roman Catholic history.

At the Second Vatican Council (1961-65), the Catholic bishops of the world struggled long and hard before endorsing, against all previous traditions, the conception of religious liberty pioneered by the United States; young Bishop Woytyla, the future John Paul II, had spoken eloquently in favor. Until recently Rome had been unwilling to listen to the American experience or to learn from it. (Exception might be made for the influence of the American bishops in persuading Pope Leo XIII to side with labor in his classic encyclical "On the Condition of Labor," 1891.) Despite its commitment to private property, and despite its antagonism toward socialism, the Catholic Church has never yet produced a Pope who has praised the political-economic-cultural order of democratic capitalism. It was all the more impressive, then, to watch John Paul II learn from the spiritual energy he evoked from the crowds in America, and to watch his response grow warmer and more explicit as he stayed.

Among all his statements in America, the Pope's address at the United Nations on October 2 was the intellectual centerpiece. Following closely upon the major address he gave at Pueblo, Mexico, last January, it repeals none of his stands against Marxism. Indeed, it continues his effort to undercut the emphasis placed by Marxist Christians and "liberation theologians" on material economic concerns.* Yet it must also be said that the UN address was a major disappointment, and the reasons bear careful scrutiny.†

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* See my article, "Liberation Theology and the Pope," COMMENTARY, June 1979.

† As I am concentrating here on the Pope's political philosophy, this is not the place to discuss issues of more intramural Catholic interest—chiefly sexual matters, including contraception, divorce, homosexual activity, and the ordination of women priests. Suffice it to say that, even where I disagree with the Pope on these matters (particularly contraception), I am delighted that he did not try to flatter the prejudices of contemporary civilization. Those who would improve upon his teaching need to know that neither bluster nor intimidation, neither opinion polls nor passions, will suffice.

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Because of the press of time, the Pope's oral address (the transcript of which appeared in the New York *Times*) was shorter than the written text.* Several paragraphs, and many lines, were omitted. In general, the pattern of these omissions favors traditional thinking; materials which the Pontiff may have judged his hearers to expect of him he elided, the newer things he retained. This in itself gave an unfortunate effect to his words. In what follows, I am mainly following the oral transcript, clarifying only a few points by the written text.

There is no doubt that the audience assembled before him at the UN was most diverse, and that many of the Pope's words were received with visible discomfort on the part of the representatives of regimes which today practice—publicly, officially, and in full view—the many systems of repression the Pope was at pains to analyze in the light of day. There could not have been much comfort taken in totalitarian lands from the Pope's purpose of awakening individual conscience.

On the other hand, the Pope's address reads not at all like his first encyclical, *Redemptor Hominis*, which he wrote himself. It seems to be a staff document through and through, couched in the special jargon which has recently become conventional in papal statements. Indeed, a review of recent official statements on "peace and justice," the current euphemism for a theology of politics and economics, plainly exposes the rhetoric mined for the address at the UN.

After his opening remarks, directed through the UN members to "all the men and women living on this planet, to every man and woman without any exception whatever," John Paul took up five arguments in turn.

First, he recalled the principles of the founding Charter in 1945 and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. Many Catholic scholars see in these documents a vindication of the Catholic tradition, a kind of parallel to natural-law theroies. (Jacques Maritain, the distinguished Catholic philosopher who was for a time Ambassador of France to the Holy See, had considerable influence on their formulation.) The Pope recalled the unspeakable sufferings of Auschwitz, in which the aspirations of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights were born: "This declaration was paid for by millions of our brothers and sisters, at the cost of their suffering and sacrifice, brought about by the brutalization that darkened and made insensitive the human conscience of the oppressor and of those who carried out a real genocide. This price cannot have been paid in vain." The aims of the United Nations, therefore, exceed all "political interest" narrowly understood.

The political philosophy John Paul II enunciated on this basis undercuts totalitarian regimes, and undergirds representative democracy. State officials, he said, represent individual human beings. All political activity "comes from man, is exercised by man, and is for man"—the words, almost, of the Gettysburg Address. Then there appear these important lines not given orally:

> . . . if political activity is cut off from this fundamental relationship and finality, if it becomes in a way its own end, it loses much of its reason to exist. Even more, it can also give rise to a specific alienation; it can become extraneous to man; it can come to contradict humanity itself. In reality, what justifies the existence of any political activity is service to man. . . .

In his second argument, the Pope cited Paul VI on his visit to the U.S. fourteen years earlier—"No more war. War never again"—and then briefly mentioned two of the world's present conflicts: (1) the threats exchanged by Argentina and Chile a year ago, in which papal intervention helped to avert a war; (2) the Middle East, where he invoked the issue of the "tranquility, independence, and territorial integrity of Lebanon," cautiously commended the present Egyptian-Israeli effort on the condition that it "truly represent the first stone of a general, moral peace in the area, a peace that . . . cannot fail to include a consideration and just settlement of the Palestinian question," and expressed hope "for a special statute that, under international guarantees, . . . would respect the particular nature of Jerusalem."

John Paul's third argument, applauding "the decisions and agreements aimed at reducing the arms race," was composed of two separate strands. The first purported to be a matter of empirical observation:

> The continual preparation for war demonstrated by the proclamation of ever more numerous, powerful, and sophisticated weapons in various countries shows that there is a desire to be ready for war and ready means being able to start it. It also means taking the risk that somewhere, somehow, someone can set in motion the terrible mechanism of general destruction.

The second strand, more problematical, followed Paul VI in asserting a quite untraditional definition of peace: ". . . the new name for peace is development." In John Paul II's diagnosis, "the very roots of hatred, destructiveness, and contempt —the roots of everything that produces the temptation of war—" lie "not so much in the hearts of nations as in the inner determination of the systems that decide the history of all our societies."

The Pope's fourth argument concerned distribution of wealth. Asserting that "in the modern

* The complete text of all the Pope's speeches in America is available from the U.S. Catholic Conference (1312 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005).

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world there are two main threats," the Pope continued: "The first of these systematic threats against human rights is linked in an overall sense with the distribution of material goods. This distribution is frequently unjust, both within individual societies and on the planet as a whole." He recognized that inequality "can often be explained by different historical and cultural causes and circumstances. But while these circumstances can diminish the moral responsibility of people today, they do not prevent the situations of inequality from being marked by injustice and social injury." The Pope then appealed to "the humanistic criterion, namely, the measure in which each system is really capable of reducing, restraining, and eliminating, as far as possible, the various forms of exploitation of man. . . ." He noted "disturbing factors" in the "frightful disparities between excessively rich individuals and groups on the one hand and, on the other hand, the majority made up of the poor, or indeed, the destitute, who lack food and opportunity for work or education, and are in great number condemned to hunger and disease." He called for "coordinated cooperation by all countries" and added:

> Everything will depend on whether these differences and contrasts in the sphere of the possession of goods will be systematically reduced through truly effective means; on whether the belts of hunger, malnutrition, destitution, underdevelopment, disease, and illiteracy will disappear from the economic map of the earth; and on whether peaceful cooperation will avoid imposing conditions of exploitation and economic or political dependence, which would only be a form of new colonialism.

Pope John Paul's final argument concerned the "second systematic threat" in the modern world: injustice in the field of the spirit. "For centuries, the thrust of civilization has been in one direction —that of giving the life of individual political societies a form in which there can be *fully safeguarded the objective rights of the spirit, of human conscience, and of human creativity, including man's relationship with God*" (emphasis in the original). The Pope here made the history of liberty the central thread of human history. He also distinguished between "legal formulas" proclaiming rights and those "structures of social life" which actually prevent persons from exercising those rights by compromising their chances of advancement, their professional careers, their access to posts of responsibility, and the possibility of educating their children freely. (These descriptions clearly fit non-party members in Communist societies. Indeed, it is possible that John Paul intended to direct the argument on material abuses against the Western world, and the argument on spiritual abuses against the Communist world.)

In his conclusion, John Paul returned to his earlier point about the arms race:

> The United Nations organization has proclaimed 1979 the Year of the Child. In this perspective we must ask ourselves whether there will continue to accumulate over the heads of this new generation of children the threat of common extermination, for which the means are in the hands of the modern states, especially the major world powers. Are the children to receive the arms race from us as a necessary inheritance? How are we to explain this unbridled race?
>
> The ancients said, *Si vis pacem, para bellum.* [If you desire peace, prepare for war.] But can our age still really believe that the breathtaking spiral of armaments is at the service of world peace? In alleging this threat of a potential enemy, is it really not rather the intention to keep for oneself a means of threat in order to get the upper hand with the aid of one's own arsenal of destruction? Here too, it is the human dimension of peace that tends to vanish in favor of ever new possible forms of imperialism.

BEFORE commenting upon these arguments it is necessary to understand what has been happening in papal social teaching since 1965. One of the most significant actions of the Second Vatican Council was its final document, Schema XIII on "The Church in the Modern World." In it, the bishops assembled religious attitudes toward the three "systems"—political, economic, and cultural—of modern life. Except for its many references to Scripture, this lengthy document reads like a fashionable compendium on human dignity and rights. It contains within itself the seeds of many modern ways of thinking quite different from ancient and traditional Catholic teaching.

During the fifteen-year reign of Paul VI, these seeds were amply nourished. Under the leadership of Cardinal Maurice Roy, Paul VI named a special Commission on Peace and Justice to continue the work of the Vatican Council on secular matters. Many dioceses throughout the world have formed similar "Peace and Justice" commissions in which priests and nuns, many of them trained neither in political nor in economic nor in cultural systems, gather materials on all complaints, resentments, tendencies, and dissensions that arise from worldly concerns.

Few historians of ideas would deny that economic thought is the least updated and least sophisticated specialty in Catholic (or any other) theology. Nevertheless, one of the leading experts on "peace and justice" in the United States, Father Joseph Gremillion, has compiled 623 pages of official documents on the subject, including a 140-page introduction of his own, under the title *The Gospel of Peace and Justice.**

It is a little disconcerting to have so many highly debatable statements, necessarily based upon

* Orbis Books, 1975.

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sweeping ranges of fact, elevated to the title of "gospel." It is especially disconcerting to notice in these documents a nagging hostility to the liberal tradition as it is found in the United States, Great Britain, and other democratic-capitalist nations. Of the five references to liberalism listed in the index, for example, every one contains a negative judgment. Thus, Pope Paul VI, after saying that a Christian cannot adhere to Marxist ideology, adds: "Nor can he adhere to the liberal ideology which believes it exalts individual freedom by withdrawing it from every limitation, by stimulating it through exclusive seeking of interest and power, and by considering social solidarities as more or less automatic consequences of individual initiatives, not as an aim and a major criterion of the value of the social organization." Or again: ". . . at the very root of philosophical liberalism is an erroneous affirmation of the autonomy of the individual in his activity, his motivation, and the exercise of his liberty."

One looks in vain in these official papal documents for the faintest sign of the political wisdom of the Anglo-American world. It is as though only Italy, France, Germany, and the underdeveloped world existed in Roman Catholic thought. There seems no trace of Locke and Mill, Edmund Burke, *The Federalist,* de Tocqueville, Franklin Roosevelt, John Dewey, or any recognition of the history of liberty and fraternity in the Anglo-American world. Nor does Father Gremillion, American-born as he is, offer any particular help. In the recent fashion, he appears to loathe the American system. Here is how he handles the distinction between totalitarianism and democratic capitalism:

> *Regions differing in their political systems, governmental leadership, and organizational ability:* It is already clear that countries en route to development will generally choose a planned economy, with public ownership of most productive property and basic services under strong governmental control and direction, because they cannot take the time needed for the gradual growth of a market economy. It is also clear that those advanced nations now having planned, state-controlled economies, such as the Soviet bloc, are unlikely to change to market or "guided" mixed systems in the near furtue.
>
> *Regions or nations still retaining so-called* [sic] *market systems based upon so-called* [sic] *private property and contractual relations:* These differ considerably among themselves, from the United States, Canadian, and Australian model, with their many resources and lingering frontier ethos, to socialist-leaning Britain and Italy, and export-minded, high-technology Germany and Japan, both heavily dependent upon outside raw materials and markets. These Northern nations have created the strongest economic power units of the globe, the multinational business corporations now under new scrutiny by the Third World. And the free-market region as a whole enters a time of troubles due to inflation, energy crisis, pollution, and internal disorders.

It would be difficult to find a more coherent compendium of clerical bourgeois radicalism than Gremillion uncritically presents in his introductory history of recent papal thought. Significantly, in telling the history, he notes that from 1880 until 1945, Catholic social thought "was concentrated within an oblong diamond whose points approximate Paris, Brussels, Munich, and Milan." Gremillion himself then jumps, as Rome has done, to Africa, Latin America, and formerly colonial Asia (excepting Japan, Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan, and Malaysia—all prospering through democratic capitalism).

Gremillion's vision is "planetary." He envisages hundreds of thousands of Catholic priests and nuns helping, through "peace and justice" commissions, to direct secular planners and rulers in the proper moral ordering of an "interdependent" world. But along the way, a dirty little secret leaps out. Outside the Anglo-American world, and especially in the Latin world, Roman Catholicism has a pronounced attraction toward centralized governance. The alliance between throne and altar works just as well when the alliance partners are the commissar and the local chairman of the "peace and justice" commission. Indeed, in Latin America the mix of clerical and political roles already being played by Catholic priests is well advanced.

It would be outrageous if it were not merely sad that Father Gremillion—like virtually all the other workers in "peace and justice," in America and in Rome—has blinded himself to the American experience and its historic originality. The bias against democratic capitalism is thick and tangible; it is, at times, irrational. In any case, on the evidence presented in *The Gospel of Peace and Justice,* very little thought has yet been given to the institutional arrangements by which religious liberty is effected in the daily life of nations, let alone the undeniable truth that the zone of effective religious liberty upon this planet coincides almost perfectly with the zone in which democratic capitalism has developed.

In his first argument at the UN, Pope John Paul II turned at least some tendencies of "peace and justice" theology inside-out. According to the Marxist vulgate which, as Raymond Aron has noted, hangs like a smog over European intellectual centers, the poor and hungry of the world are passive victims of the "system," and "bourgeois" political liberties may be disdained, since plainly what the poor and hungry need is bread. Pope John Paul II, however, is no Grand Inquisitor who says "First bread, then liberty." The Pope's address began with political

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liberties and ended by defining political liberties as spiritual goods superior to material goods. In the great debate between liberal democracy and economic determinism, the Pope declared for the primacy of the former. This is an important intellectual contribution; John Paul accomplished it deftly by the structure of his address. On the other hand, a close consideration of the Pope's remaining four arguments shows that he has been less successful in cutting free from "peace and justice" theology.

In his second argument, the Pope made three points about the Middle East, mentioning the territorial integrity of Lebanon, justice for the Palestinians, and the status of Jerusalem. The silence of the Pope on Israel follows Vatican policy (which still, to this day, does not recognize the state of Israel). I am deeply troubled by it and do not understand its principles. The Pope did not single out his own flock, the Christians in Lebanon, whose sufferings might be expected to make a Christian leader cry out in grief and outrage. He spoke of pre-civil war Lebanon as "an example of peaceful and mutually fruitful coexistence between distinct communities." Mentioning, then, the "Palestinian question," the Pope stopped short of endorsing a Palestinian state and he also stopped short of asking for the internationalization of Jerusalem or for a return to its pre-1967 status. Presumably, the "international guarantees" he mentioned would give some universal standing to today's religious liberties and autonomies as they have been respected under the Israeli occupation.

The Pope's third argument, about the arms race and the causes of war, was even more flawed. The roots of war, he said, lie in "the systems that decide the history of all our societies," and in the inequitable distribution of goods. Yet such a theory by no means covers all cases. The invasions of Vietnam by China, of Cambodia by Vietnam, and even of Poland by Germany in 1939 would not appear to be explained by material envy. Moreover, the phrase, "systems that decide," is suspiciously impersonal, deterministic, vulgarly Marxist. It is discordant in the thinking of one as clear about the rights of the person, the role of representative institutions, and the purpose of politics as the Pope elsewhere showed himself to be.

One expects a Marxist to stress envy; it is odd to find papal statements doing so. "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods" is God's commandment, but envy is not the only or even the most frequent source of war. Pride, greed, lust, and the will-to-power, among other passions, also lead to war.

THE Pope's fourth argument, proposing a more just distribution of the world's goods, seems to invite extortion. At least, Fidel Castro took advantage of this possibility just two weeks later at the UN, where in pressed military olive he cited the Pope almost verbatim while demanding a transfer of $300 billion from the Western nations (but not from the socialist ones) over the next ten years. Castro represents a nation now economically dependent upon the USSR and obliged in exchange to offer its young men as foreign janissaries. Since the Pope explicitly warned against "economic or political dependence, which would only be a form of new colonialism," this is presumably not what he had in mind.

But it is also unsound to imagine that the fundamental moral problem in the economic order today is distribution. As the Pope has elsewhere noted, of material goods there are never enough both because appetite is insatiable and because scarcities are real. Thus, while the Pope sometimes seemed to be suggesting that wealthier nations should, as he said in another talk, "give of their substance, not only of their plenty," one must question pragmatically how this is to be done.

The Catholic tradition, following Aristotle, has always defined justice in terms of distribution. The tradition is in this respect pre-modern. In the ancient and medieval world, the wealth of nations was perceived to be relatively static. The classic literary villain was the miser, whose hoarding deprived others of the limited common store. Modern economics introduced the insight that wealth is not static. A single acre of strawberries cultivated with intelligence and care, Adam Smith perceived, might produce eightyfold what unaided nature could alone produce on it. In such a world, the primary problem of justice is production.

John Paul seemed to suppose that there is already enough wealth in the world, and that all we need do is to distribute it. This is patently untrue. There are now 4.4 billion persons on this planet. To give each of them housing, food, medical care, and education will require far more wealth than the planet now produces. The fundamental moral task is to produce more wealth. The secrets of how this may be done are well known. Every nation that follows the democratic-capitalist way enters, even within a generation, into the ranks of the approximately twenty-eight "developed" nations of the world. The surest recipe for remaining in poverty is to maintain a socialist economy. The empirical record for the last thirty years may be consulted for corroboration.

At the end of his speech, the Pope returned for a second time to the issue of disarmament. He began with a "factual" observation: the arms race is growing. In truth, however, the United States has been steadily *reducing* its army, navy, air force, and reserves of ammunition for nearly a decade, being now considerably weaker in each of these areas than it was ten years ago. In addition, and unilaterally, the U.S. has cancelled plans to build the B-1 bomber, the neutron bomb, the long-range cruise missile, the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier,

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and other weapons systems. Its newest tanks date back to the 1960's; its artillery dates back to World War II; its strategic bombers are older than the men who fly them and would never pass fitness tests for commercial airliners; it has not built a new intercontinental-missile launcher since 1968 and many of its present stock, never tested, have been rusting in their pads for twenty years. By contrast, the forces of the Soviet Union are in every sphere stronger than they were a decade ago, more fully modernized, and prepared for operation through a worldwide system of transport and communications. Relatively and absolutely, there is in fact *no* arms race. The U.S. has been declining; the USSR has been ascending.

The Pope's principle is that the mere possession of nuclear arms constitutes an intention to use them first. Yet one power on this planet, and one only, has declared publicly that its intention and destiny require world domination. That power is the only power whose dominance over other nations has continued to grow, state-by-state, since 1945. Once that nation gained possession of the secrets of the atom bomb, what was the moral imperative of those who cherish liberty? If we are to see to the future of our children, as the Pope enjoins us to do, weakness before such a nation is morally inexcusable. To disarm as far as the U.S. has already done is already to be culpable. To disarm further would be morally unconscionable. The defense of liberty and human dignity cannot be based upon wishfulness.

IN TRYING too hard to be a "pontiff"—a bridge to every part of the world—John Paul II is either not yet ready to take a fully empirical view of the international situation or not yet ready to say everything he does see. Between his inspiring vision and his description of international realities there lies, so far, a disappointing gap. One had hoped that his wartime experiences and his endurance of early struggle would have hardened his mind as well as his soul. One must pay him the credit that he has us arguing about many of the right things, even where his own observations and analyses fall short of reality. But if it is part of the collegial task of a Pope to inspire the whole community to advance the common wisdom, it is part of our task to do the same.

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Cubans in Arabia?
Or, The Meaning of Strategy

Edward N. Luttwak

WHEN Senator Richard Stone began asking questions about Soviet doings in Cuba during his ten minutes of allowed time on the very first morning of the SALT hearings last July, the staff experts sitting behind the semicircle of Senators of the Foreign Relations Committee exchanged despondent looks; some audibly groaned. There goes Stone, running for reelection in his Florida constituency full of refugees from Cuba, crassly misusing his ten minutes for crude electoral purposes, instead of questioning Defense Secretary Brown and Secretary of State Vance on the far greater issues before the committee: SALT itself, détente, the "capping" of the arms race, and so on.

The incisive precision of Stone's questions gave warning to the more alert that perhaps there was something new in the stale old Cuban issue after all. Weeks later, in the voice of another Senator, Frank Church, we all discovered that there was indeed something new, the now famous Soviet "brigade"—an armored formation that is inherently a combat unit but which can also be of use for training. During the weeks of confused non-crisis that followed, the groaning of the SALT experts did not cease; their own issue, the strategic issue *par excellence*, was being submerged by all the heated talk about a mere two or three thousand Russian troops, whose presence ninety, nine hundred, or nine thousand miles away was equally insignificant.

The experts, whose views have by now been reproduced in dozens of editorials, were categorical: SALT is of central importance, while the brigade is a purely symbolic issue, empty of meaning. At most a narrow and technical significance was seen in the episode: the belated and fortuitous discovery of the brigade was a reminder of the shortcomings of our highly technical approach to intelligence collection, in which the contribution of human sources has been reduced to very little by an institutionalized indiscretion that frightens off potential agents. Otherwise, as far as the experts were concerned, it was downright odious that the discovery of the brigade should take on such great importance in the politics of SALT ratification merely because some demagogues could draw an utterly false analogy between the missiles of 1962 and the Soviet troops of 1979. By now we have heard this verdict from all those who aspire to expert status, from columnists of "moderate" views (on both sides of the SALT debate) to McGeorge Bundy writing in jocular fashion in the New York *Times*. And there matters seemingly rest, no doubt to the great satisfaction of the President, whose own speech on the subject merely restated that view before proceeding to urge the ratification of SALT, in characteristically extravagant language.

It is perhaps a natural consequence of our post-Vietnam predicament, in which we try to make foreign policy without a consensual world view, without a coherent scheme of our interests, and without even the vaguest sense of a national strategy, that our government policy-making and even our public debates on foreign affairs have themselves acquired a fragmentary character. We deal with issues *seriatim*, one by one as they arise, in reciprocal isolation, in a manner that we are pleased to call pragmatic but which is in fact merely episodic. Having no plan of concerted action ourselves, we imagine that others too are without plans; having no strategy ourselves, we imagine that others too conduct their policy in a fashion entirely unstrategical. Hence the episodic outlook. Thus, during the last two years we have had at least three inconclusive minicrises on Cuban affairs: over the supply of a pair of Soviet-built submarines to the Cuban navy, over the stationing of Russian-piloted MiG-23's on the island, and lately over the brigade. In each case, the facts leaked out when the administration refused to publish forthrightly what even a willfully inadequate intelligence service had discovered. In each case, with visible reluctance, the administration resorted to what it calls "quiet diplomacy" in a futile attempt to dissuade the Russians. (This phrase, once used to describe a resort to firm language behind closed doors, has now been rede-

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fined to mean a highly publicized *pro forma* exercise, in which complaints are presented without threatened sanction, in a manner that positively invites Russian rejection.)

In each case, after each leak, the administration has been generous and prompt in releasing information calculated to minimize the importance of the episode. Of the Soviet submarines given to Cuba, we were told that they were non-nuclear in propulsion, only two boats having been delivered, of which only one is capable of combat, and that a diesel-electric F-class boat —a familiar old-style torpedo-firing submarine and not at all a missile platform of strategic import. On the MiG-23's, reassurance had to wait awhile; an intelligence "investigation" had to be conducted to establish whether they were air-combat fighters, and therefore "defensive," since another MiG-23 version is known from Europe as a fighter-bomber armed with nuclear weapons, among other things. Eventually the administration announced that the aircraft newly arrived in Cuba were good MiG-23's and not bad ones. The revelation was treated by many with all the respect that high technicity still evokes, even though every schoolboy knows that nowadays all fighters are inherently fighter-bombers as well, the change being achieved by the simplest of field modifications.

Finally, in the case of the brigade the administration essentially accepted the Russian explanation, according to which it is a "training center," and the President even tried to capitalize upon our acceptance of the status quo. In his television speech, he attempted to suggest that the Russians had somehow made a concession by agreeing, if only tacitly, to use the brigade for training alone. The real question remained entirely unaddressed in the President's speech: if the brigade is a training center, whom is it training, and for what?

Thus, the separate facts, too visible to be ignored, were duly recorded, and dismissed, in piecemeal unstrategical fashion. Only two things have failed to emerge in the debate: over the last two or three years, Cuban forces have rather suddenly been upgraded with first-class weapons, after a long period in which Cuba received only obsolescent equipment. And, as an inevitable consequence, military facilities on the island have been transformed into a versatile support base for the Soviet Union. In between the advertised MiG-23's and F-class submarines there is now in place the connective tissue of a full panoply of forces, notably ground forces equipped with first-class T-62 battle tanks (thirty years newer than the T-34's which the Cubans used in Angola) as well as combat carriers of commensurate quality and modern battlefield air defenses. In air power, the Cubans, who until quite recently had only short-range interceptors of 1950's vintage, now fly late-model MiG-21's and their own MiG-23's. The Cuban navy has some thirty missile boats, in addition to the one modern submarine which is no doubt the first of several. As for the parallel emergence of the Soviet support base, it is evident that even a single submarine needs an appropriate maintenance organization, and indeed one has been provided on a generous scale. Inevitably, the facilities now stand ready to maintain Soviet submarines too. Equally, air-base facilities which can maintain late-model Soviet aircraft in Cuban service can offer the same service to late-model Soviet combat aircraft which retain their original insignias.

To see things in the broad rather than as isolated fragments is the first and simplest rule of strategy; in this case, the exercise yields a fuller picture of the Cuban problem but gives no cause for any great or immediate alarm. Even as a military power of first-class quality, even if newly made so by recent Soviet decisions that might have purposes, Cuba is still small in quantity and cannot be a direct threat. As for the Soviet support base, its emergence is an unpleasant development but also not *prima facie* a significant threat.

The second rule of strategy, however, is to respect the *connection* among diverse things, and as soon as we apply that rule to Cuba it becomes clear that what is happening is of true and very great strategic importance, indeed more so than SALT, much more.

The primary connection that needs pursuing (and the only one to be pursued here) arises from the current upgrading of the Cuban intervention capability. In Africa, the Cubans have already been successful enough, but then neither in Angola nor in Ethiopia did they face effective armored forces or effective air power. In sub-Saharan Africa, even now, all the local military forces—except for those of South Africa—can still be defeated by infantry combat alone, with a few tanks and fighter-bombers thrown in largely for psychological effect. Disciplined infantry, commanded by officers with rudimentary company-level tactical skills, was amply sufficient to prevail in both Angola and Ethiopia.

But so long as their abilities did not exceed that level, the utility of the Cuban forces to the Soviet Union was sharply limited in geographic scope. Certainly Cuban infantry could not be used in those parts of the world where all serious ground combat must be armored-mobile combat, as in the Middle East. Writing in the New York *Times*, McGeorge Bundy cheerfully dismissed the training value of the Soviet armored brigade on the grounds that by now the Cubans have much more combat experience than the Russians. No doubt Mr. Bundy is a qualified expert on things more elevated than the operational art of warfare; he evidently does not know that to fight armor, highly specialized brigade-level command skills are essential, because it is only on that scale that battal-

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ions of tanks and of mechanized infantry, as well as self-propelled artillery and air-defense weapons, can all be integrated into a coordinated fighting force—such integration being the *sine qua non* of armored warfare. Nor is any amount of war experience of value as a substitute, if limited to infantry combat alone.

Detailed scrutiny of the alternatives reveals by elimination that there is in fact only one possible theater of operations for Cuban *armored* forces: the Arabian peninsula. Any Cuban intervention force would be quite marginal in the China-Vietnam theater or the Arab-Israeli conflict. In the case of the Arabian peninsula, on the other hand, the local forces are small enough (even if weapon inventories are large) to give full scope to a Cuban force. But in that theater the vast distances and the desert terrain mean that infantry forces are totally out of place; any intervention force must have armor-mobile capabilities. All other theaters of war are ruled out, either because any Cuban force would be too small, or because no armor would be needed (i.e., Central America).

WHEN the connection is next pursued into the region itself, we find an obvious entry point for a Cuban intervention force in the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, or South Yemen to use that country's shorter and more truthful name. South Yemen is almost as much a Soviet client as Cuba, and for that reason alone unique among all the Arab lands. Yet, although it is indeed in Arabia, the country occupies the southwest corner of that vast peninsula, whereas the oil, and thus the U.S. interests that may accurately be called vital, are found in the opposite corner. What, then, would be the purpose of a Soviet-sponsored Cuban intervention?

To be sure, the Russians now control (and are expanding) the British-built airfield and logistic base in Aden, the main town of Yemen, and this has attracted much attention of late. But to connect the Aden base with the putative Cuban intervention force on this fact alone would clearly be arbitrary. In the first place, the Russians have not yet completed work on their base complex at Massawa, the Ethiopian port on the opposite side of the Red Sea. The Aden complex may therefore be servicing the Soviet effort in Ethiopia. Moreover, South Yemen itself has recently been in conflict with North Yemen, and the Soviet logistic build-up may simply be a necessary element in the Soviet Union's assistance to the "progressives" among the Yemenis.

But then two facts intervene to upset the calming thought that Russian ambitions may encompass only the southern access to the Red Sea. In the first place, recent intelligence reports have identified the shipment to South Yemen of Soviet T-62 battle tanks, BMP combat carriers, and ZSU-23-4 anti-aircraft vehicles (of 1973 fame). This is all class-A equipment; the Yemenis are not receiving any of it, and indeed their troops are just barely able to use the simpler class-B materiel they already have (T-54 tanks, BTR-152 carriers, and 37mm old-style anti-aircraft guns). Moreover, and more decisively, we observe that far from becoming more intense, the conflict between the two Yemens is being moderated—and by the Soviet Union. Indeed, the Russians are now reestablishing their influence in North Yemen (no doubt thanks to the agonized indecision of the Carter administration in providing help to the North when it was under attack).

Nor can the modern armored equipment being stocked in Aden be meant for the Ethiopians. With Somalia soundly defeated, they do not need such things at present. On the other side we observe that the class-A equipment now being stocked in Aden is identical to that of the Soviet brigade in Cuba, and therefore in turn to the brigade set that the Cubans are now being trained to use. At this point, the Cuba-Yemen connection ceases to be arbitrary.

The geographic objection remains. Not even a Rommel would dream of launching an armored offensive across more than a thousand miles of desert in a quixotic attempt to reach the "useful" parts of Arabia. Again, we are driven back to the explanation that the Soviet action in the Ethiopia-Yemen area has limited ambitions, the goal being merely to control the Red Sea passage. To be sure, this would already amply suffice to be of great concern to some, notably both Egypt and Israel as well as the Sudan, not to speak of all the users of the Suez Canal rather less directly. But a Soviet attempt to control the Red Sea is still the sort of threat that can easily be discounted in foreign-policy conversations on this side of the Atlantic.

UNFORTUNATELY, even such dubious comfort does not survive a somewhat wider scrutiny of the region. South Yemen shares a border with the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman, a country ruled by a sheikh whose politics stand at the very opposite end of the Arab political spectrum from those of the rulers of South Yemen. A supporter of the Israel-Egypt peace, a man of moderate views in general, and invariably described as "pro-Western," the Sultan is now under fierce propaganda attack by the Iraqis and other radical Arab voices. Recently, Moscow's radio has joined the chorus, helpfully suggesting the assassination of the ruler.

The Sultanate has some oil, though not very much. But within its territory lies the Arab side of the straits of Hormuz, which control all sea access to the Persian Gulf; moreover, its northern borders are contiguous with Saudi Arabia, as well as with the small statelets of the Trucial Coast where oil deposits are great and regimes exceedingly fragile.

For some years, the Sultanate was troubled by a

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guerrilla war in its Dhorfar area adjacent to South Yemen, and the guerrillas were of course paid and armed by South Yemen and thus indirectly by the Soviet Union. The guerrillas were defeated with British and some Iranian help, but not utterly destroyed, and many of them are now known to be kept warm and ready in South Yemen.

At this point, the connection becomes rather more direct. A Cuban intervention force is being trained in armored warfare. The appropriate equipment is being stocked in South Yemen—the entry point. And the traditional-moderate Sultanate is a ready initial target, itself the perfect platform for a wider offensive that can be far more ambitious.

The pieces are on the chessboard; the operation could unfold at any time. With a revived Dhorfar movement providing the political camouflage of an internal revolt, and the chronically aggressive South Yemen government mounting a military attack in the guise of an intra-Arab fight, the Cubans could inject the *coup de grâce* of an armored threat which the small Omani army could not possibly resist. Naturally, useful political cover would also be forthcoming from voices familiar and near at hand: the one-man rule of the Sultan, it would be said, is anachronistic and the traditional regimes of Arabia are doomed anyway. Others would more pointedly ask why we must always support anti-democratic elements against the "people," and why we must always oppose "nationalism." And of course the very prospect of dying for Muscat and Oman would be invoked in ridicule.

It is painfully obvious, however, that if the United States, keeper of the West's long-range intervention capacity, does not act in time, the consequences would make SALT and all that seem like so much piffle. All the oil of Arabia would come under the direct threat of a radical Cuban-supported (and thus Soviet-sponsored) regime, whose mere emergence might well suffice to inspire radical seizures of power in the small Trucial sheikhdoms that have much oil. And of course now that Iran no longer acts as a protective force, there is no regional power able and willing to resist. Even if political warfare and the momentum of a radical victory close at hand did not in themselves suffice to undo the Saudi regime from within, war could do so from without. Some warfare would in any case be likely to begin immediately, if only because the long border between Oman and Saudi Arabia is poorly demarcated and in parts contested. And besides, right from the start, without any wider effect, political or military, the new leadership would control its side of the straits of Hormuz, through which all but a fraction of Persian Gulf oil must now transit. Narrow and easily blocked, the Hormuz channels are conventionally described, with perfect accuracy, as the jugular vein of the industrial democracies.

IF THE second rule of strategy is that a proper respect be paid to the connection among things, a corrective third rule might be that not all puzzles have a single solution, and that no hostile plan necessarily corresponds to an observed pattern of events consistent with such a plan.

It is of course perfectly possible that the Russians, in upgrading Cuban forces, are only following the logic of military bureaucracies, having merely accelerated their efforts since January 1977 on the presumption—entirely natural—that Carter's decision to suspend photographic overflights of Cuba was an expression of American acquiescence. Similarly, the logistic build-up in Aden may be directed by the continued expansion of the Soviet naval and air long-range intervention capability—as well as by a parallel and again bureaucratically induced ambition to introduce modern armored warfare to South Yemen. (The Yemens, being miserably poor and spectacularly backward, could certainly use advancement, even if a *Panzer-Korps* is not perhaps their most pressing need.) Finally, the collateral emergence of a Soviet airbase complex in Afghanistan need not be necessarily connected with a politico-military seizure of Oman—even if it has been reported that the base is now insulated from the Afghan civil war by Soviet troops, and that it is being developed to accommodate long-range transports.

Such may be the true and diverse explanations of the diverse facts, and it may thus be an intellectual error to connect the separate elements into the picture of a coherent threat. But the exercise of strategic prudence is not a process identical with the disinterested search for the truth of others' intentions. The latter, in any case, are instantly changeable. Confronted as we are by the systematic preparation of all the necessary instruments of a Soviet-sponsored attack on our access to Persian Gulf oil, we cannot wait for the unfolding story to yield its natural truth, for by the time this happens it would be too late to respond.

The essential preliminary is to reveal to the American people the full dimensions of the threat, of which the brigade is merely the most easily visible element. The President conspicuously failed to do this in his speech on the brigade. Why? One may believe perhaps that in all the privileged information the White House has, there is some evidence compelling enough to refute the Cuba-Yemen-Oman connection here construed. But it will be noted that, in the President's speech, among all the words about Cuba and the Caribbean which preceded his peroration on the virtues of SALT, a little phrase was interjected about the need to strengthen American naval forces *in the Indian Ocean,* that is to say, off the coasts of Yemen and Oman. Suitable inquiries elicited the expected: the President's

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experts on foreign affairs had duly construed the facts as they have been construed here, for indeed the facts cannot reasonably be interpreted otherwise. And accordingly they wanted to write the speech as an announcement of an American reaction as wide-ranging and energetic as the emergent threat already is. But the President's experts on foreign matters were outweighed by those whose concerns are more immediate and indeed electoral; these are men who know not of Muscat or Oman and who are distant even from an elementary sense of the national interest overseas. Thus the domestic political imperative of SALT ratification easily displaced the exercise of a minimal strategic prudence.

Potentially momentous in itself, the failure to confront the Cuba-Yemen-Oman connection is of wider significance still as a reminder of the most pervasive dysfunction of our foreign policy as a whole. What has been revealed as empty of strategic significance is not the Soviet brigade in Cuba, but rather the obsessive pursuit of the cumbersome legalisms of SALT at a time when our chief adversary is ceaselessly maneuvering to prevail. While our best minds use their energies to explain away all that Moscow tries to do, in Moscow a machine of imperial ambition is at work, whose goal is to exploit all our points of weakness around the world. In the case of the Cuba-Yemen-Oman connection, as in larger things, our failure of strategy is not of an intellectual order; it is, rather, political. It is the politics of willful inadvertence that are obscuring the need to confront threats more and more ominous.

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Moscow Night in New York
A Story

Tova Reich

THE Russified professor of literature, Marius Bronstein, was the first to arrive, as usual. Irina stood in front of her mirror, a hairpin and a cigarette between her lips, and she kept track of his progress as he stumbled down the stairs from his apartment two floors above and collapsed against the door. "Pavlik, let the turtle in," Irina sang out. This was her name for Marius, a reference to his trademark garment invariably adorned with a chain from which a medallion with an enameled portrait of Turgenev was suspended; it had been fashioned by his first wife, a craftsperson. Pavel sighed and opened the door. Marius, with his patriarchial white hair and beard, and the red veins illuminated on his nose, executed a cocky salute and headed straight for the freezer where the vodka was stored. "What's this, Pavel?" he complained, "Smirnoff, no Stolichnaya?" Pavel Rubin shrugged his narrow shoulders. There was no sense explaining to this ethnic that Smirnoff was as good, if not better. In the bedroom Irina blotted her lipstick on a tissue and checked herself in the glass. "Good," she said aloud in her husky voice, which harmonized perfectly with the reflection she saw—a small, compact woman in a tailored blue suit, muscular calves, deep-set gray eyes, and rich hair streaked with silver. In Moscow she had been a celebrated surgeon, but to her daughter Yelena, now living, unkempt and slovenly, on a kibbutz in Israel, she had said more than once, "All I have ever desired was to be beautiful. All I have ever wanted was for men to be smitten by me."

Irina sat down on the bed and lit another cigarette from the embers of the first. She decided to put off her entrance into the living room until somebody else arrived. Marius's voice was rising and Pavel's was lowering proportionally. Well, it would have been impossible to exclude Marius, though he was not a real intellectual, Irina said to herself again, as she had said many times aloud, once even to Marius himself, with the result that he had keeled into drunken, pitiful sobs. "Yes, I know it," he had wailed. "I'm a fraud, a certified fraud. What to do? What to do?" And all Irina could think of saying to him at the time was, "At least you can be thankful that you're a *real* fraud." Then Marius had recovered, and, to Irina's astonishment, he had seemed oddly pleased with himself. Later he had confided to her that that night of his outburst had been the most Russian he had ever passed, an authentic baring of the soul in the company of friends, out of the pages of Dostoevsky. What claim did he have on the Russian soul? Irina demanded to know.

Tonight, if only Marius didn't spoil things, tonight they would have a true Russian night. The guests were deliberately chosen and balanced, the émigré elite. And the *pièce de résistance* would be the newest dissident to reach America's shores, Boris Kagan himself, twice hospitalized at the Serbsky for cynical political reasons, nine months in isolation. Already he was at work on his book entitled *Wall Therapy*. Among the eight persons who would be sitting around her table tonight, there must already be ten books in various stages, Irina reflected proudly, three about the Gulag alone. A mighty weight of suffering would be assembled there. Irina, too, had an advance on a book, which she privately called "Cutting Out the Heart of Communism." In Moscow she had also operated a salon, but there her flat had been magnificent, decorated with priceless icons, works of art, Persian rugs, and antiques, not like this place, with its paper walls and its common furniture. All these treasures they had been forced to leave behind when Pavel's manuscript exposing the legal system in Russia had been found. They had emigrated, officially to Israel, but how could people like themselves ever be at home in that parochial little socialistic state, with no sophistication to speak of?

The doorbell rang. That must be the Slonims, Irina concluded, and snatching one last look at herself in the mirror, she walked resolutely, in her mannish coquettish way, into the living room. It was, in fact, Olga Smith and Grigori Lvov, who were living together, as the Americans would say, as if they had made yet another technological advance. Olga, an English teacher from Odessa but now a Russian instructor at City College, had acquired her unusual last name through her brief marriage to an American sailor. She had come over

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as Smith's bride, and had left him after three weeks because of her intense physical aversion for her husband. The two habits of Smit, as she called him (she expectorated it like "spit"), which seared her with disgust, were his never-ending cleaning of his teeth with dental floss and the way his trousers settled well below his waist, exposing in the front a trail of black hair, like a caravan of ants, and in the rear, the shallow upper portion of his natal crease. She was a robust, scrubbed woman, taller than Grigori, or Greg, as he was known to his friends at the state hospital. Greg was working there until he passed his examination for foreign medical graduates and could resume his psychiatric training, which had been interrupted when he defected by jumping the ship on board which he was serving as doctor. Irina was very fond of Grigori, and, as an older colleague and a woman of some experience, she considered it her duty and delight to advise him in matters of profession and of the heart. Grigori was a small man, with dark, wounded eyes and a full beard, and tonight he was wearing a denim jacket and pants which were too blue, too new, almost starched. Irina made a mental note to tell him that his costume was not *comme il faut*. She would even undertake to wash it for him a few times, until it was suitably faded and creased. Grigori, too, was writing a book called *The Soviet Snake Pit*. He and Olga had arrived on his new motorcycle, upon which he lavished his shameless adoration.

Pavel greeted Olga in his old-fashioned way, lifting her big rough hand as if it were made of porcelain and kissing it with a gallant bow of his distinguished gray head. Irina took both of Grigori's hands in her own and they kissed each other twice, once on each cheek. They all sat down around the coffee table upon which slices of salami, lox, herring, and even a bit of caviar were set out. "Try the bread," Irina urged. "I finally found a good Russian bakery on Queens Boulevard."

Grigori, whom Irina was watching carefully, tasted and said, "An attempt! Not bad, but not like at home certainly. I think your standards are dropping, eh Irene?"

Pavel laughed. "I gave some Russian bread to the son of an American acquaintance," he said, "and—do you know?—the boy did not like it at all. 'Takes too long to eat,' the kid said. What a country!" Grigori sampled another appetizer. Irina lit a cigarette and jerked her head toward the corner of the room, where Marius, a notorious womanizer ("I lecher at the university," he liked to say), had already ensnared Olga. Marius was telling Olga that she looked like a true Russian peasant, and Olga, though smiling outwardly, was genuinely insulted and was resolving to embark on a weight loss program the very next morning.

"Well, is Kagan coming?" Grigori asked Irina.

"He promised, yes," she replied with triumphant proprietariness.

"So," said Grigori, "what's he like? There are some who say he's really crazy."

Pavel's lips pursed. "I would only wish to be as crazy as he!" Pavel knew Kagan well, from their student days in Moscow, and though in his heart he envied Kagan for his bold dissent and the fame it had brought him, Pavel was scrupulous about defending his friend against all charges.

"And who else?" Grigori wanted to know.

"Just the Slonims," said Irina. "You know them?"

"Ah yes. I met them once at the Tolstoy Foundation. She's a real beauty. Wait until your Marius sets eyes on her. What's her name again?"

"Nadezhda."

"That's right, Nadia Slonim. An actress, no?"

"An actress, yes," Irina confirmed, flinching slightly. "But do you really consider her beautiful? Attractive maybe, but her eyes are too small and her hair is a little sparse." Irina unconsciously smoothed her own thick chignon.

Grigori smiled. "And what does the lovely Nadia do?" he persevered, taunting Irina affectionately.

Irina took refuge in her cigarette. Pavel came to her aid. "What can an actress do in exile?" he asked rhetorically. "Her English is not so good."

"For a while she worked as just another clerk at Bloomingdale's," said Irina. "Now I think she went where everybody ends up—Radio Liberty."

"And her husband, what's his name? Yuri, I think."

"Yuri is with the Voice of America," Pavel said.

Grigori said, "In Moscow, also, he worked for a government institute. People used to say he was an agent. Some said KGB, others said CIA."

"That was because he was never drafted into the army," Irina explained. "Nadia told me that the reason for his deferment was that he has a vision problem." Irina shrugged, discounting, as it were, the way in which Yuri's handicap reflected on his wife.

Pavel added that Yuri, after his short demonstration in Red Square, had been kept in detention for only one day, not longer. "Here, too, I think he's being investigated by the FBI. Nothing to do." Pavel frowned. The charges and countercharges of spying were an occuptional hazard in émigré circles, and everyone and no one took them seriously.

"Well, it's quite a group you've got tonight," said Grigori. "It should be a real Russian evening."

"I'm hoping," Irina said, raising her hands and showing two sets of crossed fingers. "I'm serving *borshch*."

"And for the main course?"

"Hamburgers and hot dogs, of course," she replied with a wink.

THERE was a flurry outside the door, and the sound of high-pitched feminine hilarity. The Slonims came in, and while Yuri, in his plaid sports jacket and stiff new jogging shoes

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stood shyly at the entrance testing his welcome through his dark-framed spectacles, Nadia skipped lightly over to the coffee table. "Oh, I'm so hungry!" she announced in her dramatic way, and immediately she began to pile the meat and fish on top of the bread and wolfed them down, one heap after another. So she continued for about five minutes, seemingly oblivious to her attentive audience, but well aware of how delicious, how laden with the promise of passion she looked when gorging. Marius had an excellent view of her from the rear, and he was alert. Olga could not help but note Nadia's fashionable slimness, but this exhibitionism—well, it was positively excessive. Pavel, on his way over to ease Yuri's discomfort, whispered to Grigori that Nadia had been the woman's rifle champion of Moscow, and Grigori pictured himself as the target. Irina, employing her scientific methodology, classified Nadia in the first stage of émigré development. Nadia was still painfully foreign looking, with her thin hair pinned up in braids, her too heavy eye makeup, her long, folksy amber earrings, and her knit slacks and sweater, which Irina recognized as the sort one bought in Rome, the way station to the U.S. Grigori she placed in the second stage, with his not quite successful attempt at incorporating the casual American style. The third stage was total, bland assimilation, and the fourth and final stage, where Irina placed herself, was a subtle mixture of the alien mode with one's own native culture, which added a definite exotic accent that was highly alluring and self-composed.

"Finished," Nadia said, looking around for the first time and wiping her glistening lips.

Marius shuffled toward her, applauding. "A magnificent entrance, Nadezhda Alexeyevna," he declared.

"My father's name is Pyotr," she said haughtily, recognizing a predator, and turning to Irina she asked, "Now, when do we eat?"

"We are waiting for Boris Kagan," Irina said.

"Oh, Kagan is coming?" said Yuri.

"You know him?" Pavel asked.

"We've met. He's definitely crazy."

"I beg to disagree," Pavel responded sullenly.

There was nothing like an argument to put Yuri at his ease. "Did you know how he's managing here? He has refused every penny from HIAS. He is sending registered letters to prisoners in Russia, and when they're not delivered he demands compensation from the postal union. There's some sort of international agreement that guarantees delivery of mail to the addressee. He's just another cracked legalist."

"First of all," said Grigori, who was offended by the smugness of this man, this owner of a beautiful woman, "Kagan is subsisting very nicely off his teaching job and his advance. Second, his mail scheme is a brilliant maneuver, in my opinion. In this way Kagan very cleverly embarrasses the Soviets, tying them up in knots with their own legal ropes."

"He has become religious," said Yuri, as if this were the ultimate, irrefutable evidence of Kagan's madness.

"A very natural course for a person who comes out of our atheistic, materialistic fatherland," said Pavel. Speaking to Grigori now, as to an ally, Pavel said, "Do you know what Kagan told the first psychiatric commission that examined him after his book about the camps? One of the members asked him why he had written it, and Boris answered, 'To make money, of course.' "

"So they declared him insane," Yuri put in.

"No, not that commission," Pavel corrected. "That commission found him legally responsible. His motives made sense to them. They understood. It was a second group, to whom he said he wrote the book because he considered it his duty to publicize the abuses and change the system. It was this second bunch that diagnosed him as a sluggish schizophrenic with reformist tendencies."

The party split up in this way: the three men, Pavel, Grigori, and Yuri, standing now with drinks in their hands, on guard, were continuing their debate about the mental status of Boris Kagan. When they had utterly exhausted that subject, and no consensus was forthcoming, they proceeded to trade capsule news about other dissidents—engineers, scientists, professors—not one of whom had been able to find work in his own field, all of them embittered and depressed, griping and scribbling away, trying to make ends meet through tiresome lectures, books, and articles about their confrontation with Soviet officials. Ah, it was hard to start a new life, even for the young. Olga and Irina were discussing the scandalous prices in American supermarkets, but Irina reminded her, "At least we don't have to queue up for hours for a kilo of rotten potatoes." And Nadia was saying to Marius, "Oh, these Russians! Always squabbling! Put five Russians in a room and you have fifty opinions. I am so sick and tired of these Russians!" And she proceeded to give him an account of her driving test. "I had to park on a slope," she said, "and I gave the car in front of me a little shove, but just a little one, and he passed me anyway. I think he liked my smell." She had obviously dazzled the examiner as well. She and Yuri had just bought a new Capri, the sexy European car.

It was getting late and Boris Kagan had not yet arrived. Irina was alarmed about the state of the meat in her oven. "Let's start," she said at last. They all trooped over to the table, the men carrying their glasses of vodka. "Where shall we sit?" Nadia asked. "We are Russians, not Americans," Irina said disdainfully. "You may sit where you please. Couples may sit together. Men may sit beside men and women beside women." Nevertheless, they settled into traditional places, with Pavel and Irina at either end, Nadia on one side between Marius and Grigori, Olga opposite Nadia, with Yuri on her right and an empty chair for Boris Kagan at her left. Irina served the

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borshch in soup bowls, and the conversation gave way to the business of eating.

"Very nice," said Grigori, after he had swallowed his last spoonful, "but I prefer clam chowder. Last summer in Maine I had the most perfect chowder."

"Did you make this yourself?" Nadia asked.

"It's Manischewitz," Irina confessed.

"I prefer Rokeach," said Olga. "Seventy-nine cents a jar."

Irina flicked a crumb off Grigori's beard. What now? Kagan was absolutely irresponsible. This was unforgivable. With a heavy sigh, she went into the kitchen to bring the main course. Olga got up to help. There was salad, string beans, and the dried-out husk of the roast. Grigori asked for ketchup. Irina, chewing disconsolately, listened to the talk around the table, which seemed to her to be quite strained, gapped with difficult pauses. "I'll go get it," she cried suddenly, and she ran to the door. No one was there. This was not how she had imagined it would be. Again she rose abruptly, hastened to the kitchen, and returned with the salt shaker. "Who wanted it?" she asked, somewhat irritably. "Sit down, Irina," Pavel said gently, "We were only talking about the SALT treaties." When they were through with the beef, the hostess nodded toward the brass samovar, the only possession they had succeeded in taking out, and she said, "*Tchai* anyone?" But everyone, except Marius, requested coffee. Irina brought out the steaming, fragrant pot and the platter of pastries, and Olga followed behind with the cups and saucers, and a dish of broken chocolate. Nadia was thinking, wait twenty minutes after dessert, then we may leave, that's the etiquette in America.

Irina decided that had she been on the medical commission examining Kagan, she would have proposed a lobotomy. Harshly, she lit a cigarette. Pavel was sorry for Irina; he knew what she had expected, and not once had she been able to achieve it in this country, perhaps not even at home. Everyone longed to depart, to loosen his belt and go to the bathroom in peace. Marius was telling Olga about his second wife, a batik artist from whom he was separated, a stunning woman but empty, no soul. Grigori was holding up the other end of the table with chatter about a new film—had they seen it?—very evocative, "seminal," he said in English, borrowing from a reviewer. "You mean it's about semen?" Nadia flirted in an automatic, dispirited way. In certain areas of the English language, she had acquired a remarkable vocabulary. Grigori was embarrassed to be apprehended talking about such frivolities, for just then Boris Kagan walked into the room and took his seat. The door had been left open. He had entered without knocking. He looked so melancholy that Irina's hopes were revived. Perhaps the party could be redeemed after all.

Kagan merely shook his bald head to all of Irina's offers. "Just tea," he repeated, "in a glass." Irina brought it to him, with a crescent of golden lemon floating inside. "A Jewish glass of tea, with a whiff of the retired God in it," said Kagan, quoting Babel. Gloom and lofty references. Kagan was the savior of the party. Things were improving speedily, and Irina rejoiced. Boris Kagan extracted a *yarmulke* from his pocket, adjusted it on his head, and mumbled a blessing. He poured a little tea into the saucer, took a nibble from the sugar cube, and holding it between his teeth, he tilted the saucer, drew in some tea with a faint slurp and let the liquid seep through the sweetness. "Just so does the czar drink tea," he observed. What a barbarian, thought Yuri, what an anachronism he is; what is he trying to prove?

HE HAD been stuck in a taxi for three hours in the Midtown tunnel, Kagan excused himself. The cars had honked a long, piercing dirge, from which his ears were still ringing. The driver two cars ahead emerged, dragged out the driver of the car directly in front of Boris's cab, and pummeled him for fifteen minutes without mercy. "Freedom!" jeered Kagan, and he drank some more tea.

"So Boris, how is Vera?" Pavel inquired.

"She's very unhappy," Boris said. "She wanted a washing machine, and so I bought one for her. Every month I pay the installment, $36.99. Now she wants a dryer." In the old days, Vera and Boris had been the handsomest, brightest couple in their set, she with her flaxen hair and her eager blue eyes, he with his dark, slender, Semitic beauty. In those days, Boris had ravished Vera out of Pavel's embrace, and for a perilous, brooding time, Pavel had considered challenging him to a Pushkinesque duel.

"How does she pass her time?"

"She sits in bed watching the quiz shows on television. She would like to become a contestant. She says she must be at home for the children." In Moscow, Vera Kagan had been a professor of linguistics, specializing in Burmese, Thai, and Vietnamese. "She's thinking of writing a book maybe."

"Oh? What about?"

"A Far Eastern cook book," said Boris, "a trifle. But now that I don't allow her to bring pork into the house, we fight all the time."

"And the children? How are they managing?"

"Mitya keeps losing his parkas. How can I afford a new jacket every month? Now he wants a bicycle. And Masha mopes all day for her boyfriend in Moscow. It's not easy to transplant an entire family, with teenage children."

"But your work, that's the main thing," said Irina, seeking to redirect the conversation.

"When can I work, I ask you? All day I'm at the university, teaching mathematics, you know. Then there is this group and that struggle—the Jews, the Ukrainians, the Armenians, the Tatars, the liberal Americans, etc., etc. All of them call me and ask me to speak, so how can I refuse? Besides, they pay me and I need the money. Nobody cares about what I have accomplished in my own field. I get

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invited to dinner parties, like some prize Russian bear, and I can't eat anyway because the food is never kosher. Everyone wants to hear about the camps and the mental hospitals. I have become a parasite off those episodes in my life. You see before you a symbol, not a person. I tell the story again and again, and it's so dull, really, it is so miserable and dull."

"You must find time to work, Boris," Irina said, guilelessly demonstrating how she, in contrast to Vera, would have facilitated things for him. "It's essential that you write, for the cause. Your book will not be like all the others, I am sure."

"To write a book is a hopeful act, and I am quite desperate. Oh, sometimes I get up at dawn, fill the tub with water, lay a board across it with some paper and pens on top. In I go, buzzing with ambition and ideas. But then the pen slips into the water and loses its ink, then the paper gets soaked, smearing my immortal words, then the noble author himself falls asleep and wakes up suddenly, when the whole board decides to take a dip."

"What? Is the board alive?" Yuri questioned ironically.

"Once it was alive," said Boris. "Once it was part of a tree. Maybe it has some life left in it yet. In any case, it seems to be protesting against my scratching. It's not happy with its fate, and how can I blame it?" Boris's eyes twinkled.

"I hope you didn't say such things to the Soviet psychiatrists," Yuri said sternly.

"Oh no, I didn't use a board in those days. But I'll tell you what I did say. When they saw my beard they wrote down as one of my symptoms, originality. Then, when they asked me why I grew it, I told them I wanted to look like Lenin. So they added, uniqueness."

"In America, that would be a compliment," said Marius.

"To joke with the authorities is itself a symptom," Yuri said.

"I wasn't joking. Besides, they didn't get it."

"Speaking of joking," said Yuri, "what about your mail project?"

"Now, that's no joke, certainly. I have already earned over two thousand dollars from it."

"Honestly," said Yuri, "it's a wonder you can't write. In Russia you were famous for your obstinacy. Again and again they would take you away, interrogate you, ship you off, pronounce you crazy, but you never stopped. You were taking very great risks. You must have appeared very strange to them. Why in heaven's name did you persist?"

"In heaven's name, that's why!" Boris said ardently. Then, smiling rougishly, he added, "But it's funny you should ask that. That was exactly the question of the Soviet psychiatrists."

"Leave off, Slonim, eh!" Grigori said, glaring wrathfully at Yuri.

"Well," Yuri persisted, "now you're in America, the home of the free. And you're even making a profit from all that ugliness. You should be grateful."

"I always try to be grateful," said Boris. "But personally, I'd rather be in Israel."

"So, who stops you from going?" Yuri demanded. "The beauty of America is that you're permitted to dislike it and leave."

"My wife, Vera, does not wish to. She's not Jewish. In Israel, the children, too, would be considered Gentile and they would not be allowed to marry. My wife says she has moved for the last time, and all that's left for her are the reruns."

Nadia jumped up and darted over to Yuri on the other side of the table. With her little fists she delivered a barrage of punches on her husband's back. "Yuri, Yuri," she cried, "what makes you think that Boris is obliged to explain himself all the time?"

"Oh, I'm quite accustomed to it," Boris said, gazing at her impersonally, not in the ambiguous way of other men. "It's my lot. I am resigned." He turned to Irina and asked her to call a taxi for him. "Pavel will drive you," said Irina. "We have a new Fiat. Yellow."

YURI rose slowly, mortified by Nadia's public beating. "Have I ever told you about the time my wife broke my arm?" he addressed the group. Nadia was waiting at the door, her arms folded like bars across her chest. The mascara on one of her eyes was smudged, so that it looked bruised. She began to tap her foot in vexation as Yuri engaged in another brief dispute, this time with Grigori, about the Mexicans and the Vietnamese who were seeking entry into the United States. Yuri maintained that it would be catastrophic for "our country" to let in all that riffraff. Grigori took the opposite position, which matched his jeans. Olga waited too. Boris Kagan neglected to thank his hostess and left with Pavel. Irina understood that all intimacy between them had come to an end. Then, with enormous relief, she ushered the others out, kisses, like doors sealing, indiscriminately exchanged. Only Marius remained. "I'll finish my drink and then I'm off," he said.

Irina fumbled with the matches, trying to start her last cigarette. "Well, Marius, how was it?" she asked him pathetically.

"Chekhovian, rather than Gogolian."

"You're such a fool, Marius. What do you know?"

When Pavel returned he found Irina at the kitchen sink, weeping into the dirty dishes and the congealed remains of the dinner. "Why?" he asked. "Because I'm out of cigarettes," she snapped furiously. Pavel stood beside her, staring into the waste and debris. Together they mourned, she over what they had lost, he over what had once been theirs only in art.

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Roth & Baldwin: Coming Home

Pearl K. Bell

AT THE AGE of forty-six, Philip Roth has relented. He has written a short and touching novel, *The Ghost Writer,** which is remarkably free of the zeal for settling scores that soured so much of his work. In place of the animosity he lavished on nouveau-riche vulgarians in *Goodbye, Columbus,* on repressive Jewish mothers in *Portnoy's Complaint,* and destructive Gentile wives in *My Life As a Man,* Roth has drawn the characters in *The Ghost Writer* with delicacy, compassion, and a tender respect for their honorable intentions.

It is true that Roth had already become noticeably less malicious in *The Professor of Desire* (1977), the account of poor David Kepesh's life before his grotesque metamorphosis in *The Breast* (1972). After the repugnant and pitiless inanity of that fable, Roth's return to David Kepesh had barely a hint of his earlier *Schadenfreude,* as though a change of heart made him want to start all over again. Roth's fondness for using the same name and situation in several supposedly unrelated novels crops up once again in *The Ghost Writer.* The narrator, Nathan Zuckerman, a troubled young Jewish writer from Newark, has appeared before, in *My Life As a Man,* where he was the protagonist of two stories, printed entire, by Peter Tarnapol, a novelist tormented by his crazy wife. But as one might expect, Zuckerman present is not quite the same man as Zuckerman past. For one thing, Roth has endowed him with cultural sophistication and a fervent sense of literary vocation that were scarcely evident the first time. More important, he is obsessed not with the post-mortem of a hellish marriage, as he was in Tarnapol's stories, but with the classic tension that plagues writers—the discordant demands of art and life.

Life has recently been battering Nathan's conscience because his father, after reading a long story his son has written about an ancient family scandal, has accused him of betraying the Jews by disclosing such vulgarity and greed to a hostile world ("not for the *goyim*"). The arguments and raised voices have only made things worse, and Nathan has been unable to think of a way to soothe his father's bruised feelings while retaining his own literary integrity. How can he persuade his father—and the unctuous Judge Wapter to whom Dr. Zuckerman, a chiropodist, has turned for help—that the offending story is an artistic transfiguration of life that cannot be judged simply as raw experience?

As we gradually learn, Nathan is still distressed by the rift with his father when he arrives, at the beginning of *The Ghost Writer,* at an isolated Berkshire farmhouse to visit the great American Jewish novelist, E. I. Lonoff. To be granted an audience by the legendary recluse is a rare privilege, and Nathan has come as an excited pilgrim to pay homage to and seek encouragement from this "ideal father" who is "an artist instead of a foot doctor." It is a situation rich in Jamesian echoes of the tales and novellas about the literary life, such as "The Lesson of the Master" and "The Figure in the Carpet," which Henry James was writing in the 1880's and 90's. The very opening of *The Ghost Writer* ("It was the last daylight hour of a December afternoon more than twenty years ago . . . when I arrived at his hideaway to meet the great man") is immediately reminiscent, though far more spare, of the first sentence of "The Author of Beltraffio": "Much as I wished to see him . . . I was nervous and timid about meeting him—conscious of youth and ignorance, convinced that he was tormented by strangers . . . and not exempt from the suspicion that he had the irritability as well as the brilliancy of genius." In the course of the novel, Roth amplifies and orchestrates these echoes so cleverly that James himself becomes a ghostly collaborator rather than a bookish allusion.

Lonoff and James, together, are the magisterial instructive presence for the young acolyte, but the novel abounds with other literary ghosts: Kafka, Chekhov, Babel, Flaubert, and, perhaps the ghostliest of all in Roth's view, himself when young. And this suggests what the title, with its sly play on words, means: that the imagination and craft of a writer are nourished so directly by the masters of the past that they become, in no invidious sense, his "ghost writers."

Roth seems eager to demonstrate, as he was in *The Professor of Desire,* his incorrigible literariness, as though this will flout those critics who have called him vulgar. He is so drunk on reading that he even devotes part of the novel to a careful summary of James's "The Middle Years." And he is charmingly ironic about Zuckerman's boyish delight in showing off his familiarity with the classic texts—a straight-A student never at a loss for the right quotation. Enraptured by his intimacy with greatness—"Zuckerman discussing Kafka with Lonoff!"—he can envision no more perfect way to live than Lonoff's monkish dedication: "Purity. Serenity. Simplicity. Seclusion. All one's concentration and flamboyance and originality reserved for the grueling, exalted, transcendent calling." And then he remembers his father, getting red in the face because Nathan has not answered Judge Wapter's poisonous letter. How can Nathan Zuckerman deliver himself to the transcendent calling of art

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* Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 180 pp., $8.95.

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when he is being torn apart by the guilt and rages of life?

IN THE course of his visit—a blizzard forces him to spend the night—Nathan's hero worship is shaken by Lonoff's wife, who informs him of the steep price she and the children have paid for her husband's bondage to art. Sleepless and agitated after the household goes to bed, Nathan eavesdrops shamelessly on Lonoff's Olympian resistance to another visitor, Amy Bellette, a former student who wants him to leave his wife and run away with her to Italy. When he is first introduced to this beautiful and gifted young woman, with large dark eyes and a high forehead and a mysterious refugee past, Nathan is struck by her resemblance to Anne Frank, and in the hallucinatory watches of the night, she is transformed into the perfect means of conciliating his father. Suppose Anne Frank did not die in Belsen, suppose she came to America and studied with E. I. Lonoff and, years later, married the brilliant Jewish novelist Nathan Zuckerman, whom she met at Lonoff's house? "Oh, marry me, Anne Frank," Nathan pleads, "exonerate me before my outraged elders. . . . Who dares to accuse of such unthinking crimes the husband of Anne Frank?"

Roth spins this fantasy of absolution into a tantalizing web that trembles on the edge of plausibility. (In *My Life as a Man*, Peter Tarnapol had already written the preliminary exercise, *The Diary of Anne Frank's Contemporary*, and in an earlier story Roth rescued Kafka from his European fate, bringing him to Newark as a lonely refugee Hebrew teacher. Nothing is ever used just *once*.) It is a virtuoso performance, at once bittersweet and outrageous, since we know that history tells a different story. But the querulous reviewers who have chided Roth for his "lapse of taste" have missed the point. Nathan knows he cannot satisfy his father and remain the tough, aggressively honest writer he wants to be. The alternative to marrying Anne Frank in order to exonerate himself in the eyes of his father is to burn the scandalous story, and that is unthinkable. As the imperatives of guilt and ambition tempt Nathan's inflamed imagination into unimaginable extravagance, that very extravagance allows him in his fantasy to "trump" life and vindicate art. He is indeed outrageous, but it is not a matter of taste.

For all its self-mocking sassiness, *The Ghost Writer* is Roth's salute to his youthful courage in defying Jewish family pieties and committing himself to what James's dying novelist, in "The Middle Years," calls "the madness of art." Though Roth has defended himself strenuously throughout his career against the rabbis and the Wapters who accused him of abetting anti-Semitism, he has now brought the acrimonious debate into his fiction and, holding all the aces, he triumphs once again. (That one did not have to think like the Wapters to recoil from Roth's contempt for so many of his Jewish characters is not mentioned.) In their separate ways, Lonoff and James and the ghostly vision of Anne Frank embolden the young writer to trust the tale, and thus set him free.

But free to do what? There is no question that Philip Roth is a very good writer, never more appealing, witty, unguarded, than in *The Ghost Writer*. It is the best thing he has done, a bright evocation of youth and age and the literary ardor and egotism that bind them. But if in the end the book also seems rather thin, it is because it promises an intellectual and moral range which it does not wholly attain. Roth seems reluctant to engage himself fully with the demanding question he asks in many different ways throughout the novel: must life be sacrificed to art, in the uncompromising manner of a Lonoff? After all, Nathan Zuckerman does not bring Anne Frank home as his bride; when morning comes, nothing has been settled.

The dilemma deserves more patient scrutiny than it receives in Hope Lonoff's impassioned outburst, in the closing scene, against her husband's "religion of art." Her indictment is like the curtain speech in a "well-made" play—an eloquent and conveniently tidy summation of all that has gone before. "Nothing can be touched," she cries, "nothing can be changed, everybody must be quiet, the children must shut up. . . . *Not* living is what he makes his beautiful fiction *out* of!" It is a stirring speech, for her grievances are not petty. But it is hard to know how Zuckerman (and Roth) respond to her denunciation. In his haste to wrap up the package with this rousing finale, Roth skirts the messy, inelegant complications within the enigmas that have brushed across his consciousness. He has not yet assimilated the lessons of the masters as well as he would like us to believe.

NEITHER Philip Roth nor James Baldwin set out to be an "ethnic" writer, but both were forced into pigeonholes by the anger their work aroused among their own kind. The ironic difference is that while Roth was accused of relying on stereotypes that aggravated anti-Semitism, Baldwin was flayed by the black nationalists for disavowing the stereotypes that dominated conventional Negro fiction.

In his famous essay, "Everybody's Protest Novel," published in *Partisan Review* in 1949, when he was only twenty-four, Baldwin announced his determination to reject the pattern of protest that a Negro writer in America was expected to follow. Instead of depicting the black man as "merely a member of a Society or a Group" who has been condemned by the white oppressors to poverty and ignorance, Baldwin chose to understand him as "something resolutely indefinable, unpredictable." A novel like Richard Wright's *Native Son*, he argued, was crippled by its hatred and fear; its failure stemmed from "its rejection of life, the human being . . . in its insistence that it is his categorization alone which is real and which cannot be transcended."

In that bold refusal to be manacled to the racial shibboleths of the "protest novel," Baldwin even felt free, during his expatriate years in France, to write a novel about white homosexuals, *Giovanni's Room*, in the first person, if only to prove that he could do without the black-and-white chessboard on which black fiction

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played out its predictable despair. Yet *Giovanni's Room* was an act of bravura, not an interesting novel. Baldwin's true and magnificent voice could be heard in his essays and in autobiographical stories like "Notes of a Native Son," his poignant memoir of the summer of 1943, when his father died during a bloody riot in Harlem. Even after he returned to America in the early 60's, in eager response to the civil-rights movement and the rise of black nationalism, he seemed, in the lamentative reflections about race of *The Fire Next Time*, to speak out of the privacy of his mind and heart rather than as the "voice of his people." Although it prophesied a terrifying apocalypse, the essay was distinguished by its lucid dignity. It was, however, the last time he would keep his distance from the anger and hatred he had warned against in his precocious attack on the protest novel.

Despite his effort to establish his black identity, the extremist blacks would not forgive Baldwin his past. Toward the end of the 60's, Eldridge Cleaver included a vicious attack on Baldwin in *Soul on Ice*, the autobiography-*cum*-manifesto he had written in prison. With righteous ferocity he raked Baldwin over the coals not only for his homosexuality but for his "total hatred of the blacks," his literary posture, his fraternization with white liberal intellectuals, his arrogant indifference to the "political, economic, and social reference" that in Cleaver's view was the glory of Richard Wright. As for Baldwin's characters, Cleaver added in his *coup de grâce*, they "seem to be fucking and sucking in a vacuum." Stalinist criticism, it appeared, had found new life in obscenity.

In the face of Cleaver's castigation and the savage—and envious—diatribes of other black nationalists, Baldwin's stubborn independence caved in. It was hard to believe that the paranoid hysteria of *No Name in the Streets* (1972)—a curious requiem for Martin Luther King, Jr., in which Baldwin renounced King's credo of nonviolence and celebrated the guerrilla tactics of the Black Panthers—came from the same sensibility which, twenty years earlier, had declared that "the oppressed and the oppressor are bound together within the same society, they accept the same criteria . . . they both alike depend on the same reality." By this point he could even bring himself to praise *Soul on Ice* and justify Cleaver's assault on him as "a necessary warning."

Given Baldwin's cultivated urbanity and nonconformist temperament, there was no reason to assume that his commitment to the black cause would diminish his rhetorical brilliance or that he would no longer use his complex personal history and attitudes in his fiction. Yet in 1962 he did attempt, in *Another Country*, to forge a language that was more austere and "unpoetic" than the lapidary biblical cadences of his natural style. So great was the strain of his effort to write against the grain that he vitiated his intelligence with sentimentalilty and his psychological intensity with cynical violence. Neither was he able in two later novels—*Tell Me How Long the Train's Been Gone* (1968) and *If Beale Street Could Talk* (1974)—to achieve that fusion of emotion and language which once endowed his essays with incandescent power and clarity.

Now Baldwin has tried to conquer the novel again, and it is obvious that he has staked a great deal on his new book. *Just Above My Head** is the most ambitious effort Baldwin has made to portray the black communal life and culture whose absence from the protest novel he lamented long ago, when he deplored its inability to render "the relationship that Negroes bear to one another, that depth of involvement and unspoken recognition of shared experience which creates a way of life." A huge chronicle about the children of two Harlem families from the Korean war to the present, his new book will not please those of Baldwin's critics who feel that his obsession with sex squanders talent better spent in the service of his race. But although he devotes many pages to explicit accounts of both homosexual and heterosexual love to dramatize his familiar themes of love as torment and redemption, his primary concern is the black family and the children—Hall and Arthur Montana, Julia and Jimmy Miller—whose lifelong attachment is the constant of their separate destinies.

The novel opens with the sudden death of Arthur Montana in a London pub at the age of thirty-nine. A famous gospel singer, billed as "the soul emperor," he began performing in Harlem churches as a boy and quickly rose to the top. For some years before his death, his career had been in decline, perhaps because he had moved away from gospel to the secular music of the blues. But this is only suggested vaguely by Arthur's older brother and manager, Hall, who is the narrator of *Just Above My Head*. Nor are we told what physical catastrophe killed the singer, or why he had fallen into such drunken chaos toward the end of his life. Instead Hall speaks often, with the sorrowing intensity that is the hallmark of Baldwin's literary temperament, of his brother's tender sweetness, his fragility, his vulnerable innocence. But Arthur remains stubbornly unreal throughout the book, a special presence whose importance to his brother and friends and lovers we must take on faith.

The story shuttles erratically between past and present, but only when Baldwin is writing about the Montana family when the boys were young do the characters seem substantially realized—the affectionate sparring of the brothers, the holiday rituals and food and church services, the loving devotion of the hard-working parents.

In contrast to this happy family, their friends the Millers are torn apart by pride, illness, and covetous ambition. Their daughter Julia, at the age of nine, is one of the most sought-after child evangelists in New York, and since it is only in her extraordinary sermons—naive, arrogant, and funny—that Baldwin's prose catches fire in the novel, they come to an end too soon. When Julia's mother dies, she is trapped at fourteen in a brutal incestuous relationship with her father; escaping from him she becomes a prostitute, then a successful model, and for several years the

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mistress of an African chieftain in Abidjan. But all of these extraordinary permutations take place offstage, and nothing in Julia's later life can begin to match the marvel of her preaching.

Many wonderful and terrible things also happen to Hall and Arthur and Julia's little brother Jimmy, yet *Just Above My Head* is a curiously static work, partly because Baldwin seems unable to define his conception of Hall Montana: whether he is an autonomous being to whom things happen or an ill-fitting mask for the intrusive author busily shifting the scenery, revising the dialogue, and commenting sententiously on every turn of the wheel. Only the scenes in Harlem, and some later episodes in the South, when Arthur travels to Birmingham and Atlanta to sing at church rallies during the early civil-rights days, have the certainty of touch and the sharply observed detail that can allow the characters to breathe on their own. Too much of the time Baldwin the black advocate loads his pages with crude menace ("Some hale and hearty white people . . . are going to be butchered corpses soon—like tomorrow, but it is utterly absurd to pity them") or woolly abstraction (Julia had "the terrified intransigence which is the key to beauty") or meandering tirades against Marxists and liberals, neither of whom are part of the story.

Though the novel seems to have been conceived as a portrayal of black family life, Baldwin loses sight of his purpose so easily that it is stillborn. Ironically, when Hall and Julia finally settle down in nearby towns in Westchester, in the comfortable stability of middle age, they are neither black nor white, just middle class, and Baldwin seems undisturbed by the deracination. But everything he says about race in the book and elsewhere would contradict such indifference to the loss of authenticity. The problem, I suspect, arises from Baldwin's inability to decide exactly where he belongs in the black world today, and what role he must fill. His nervous irresolution was clear in a recent interview; at one moment the black crusader declaring the obsolescence of white America, in the next warning writers against such slogans, and affirming that literature is indispensable to the world. Caught between these claims to his intelligence, his language, and his dedication to his people, Baldwin has written a novel that drifts and flounders in the riptide of uncertainty.

Movies

Tory Wit

Richard Grenier

In early October 1979, while the Pope toured the United States to great acclamation, the number-one film at movie-house box offices all over America was *Monte Python's Life of Brian*, a British parody of the life of Jesus Christ widely held to be the most blasphemous motion picture ever made. The scenes of popular enthusiasm which greeted the Pope, appearing largely in his ceremonial capacity, convinced many editorialists that something like a religious revival was on (or according to the normally skeptical George Will, "at least a quickening of sympathy for religious impulses"). Yet Catholic church attendance was declining sharply. The Catholic Church had lost half of the seminarians training for the priesthood in the past ten years. Opinion poll after opinion poll showed that up to 95 per cent of the Catholics in the cheering crowds had no intention of deferring to the Pope's authority on many of the very matters on which he preached during his stay. It is, then, quite possible that the movie chosen for entertainment by film audiences during the Pope's visit is a more accurate indication of the state of religious faith in America than the enthusiastic welcome of the bicentennial-celebration-like crowds along the Pope's route.

The Catholic Conference's Office for Film and Broadcasting (OFB) complained that a movie like *Life of Brian* would never even have been granted a seal under the film industry's old production code, and that the rating board's tacit approval of the movie (it granted an "R" and not an "X" rating) tells us a lot "about the perceptions of the film industry leaders as to where the country's religious values really are." It no doubt does. And, of course, these perceptions may be right.

It has been observed, perfectly accurately, that American comedy —in films, theater, television, and

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Richard Grenier, *whose article on* Apocalypse Now *appeared in our October issue, writes widely on the movies.*

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literature—has been dominated for many decades now by Jews. But Britain's "Monty Python" group (Jones, Chapman, Cleese, Palin, Idle, and Gilliam) contains no Jews and is clearly made up of young men of Christian upbringing, producing entertainment for a predominantly Gentile audience. Interestingly, the British film producer, Lord Delfont, who is Jewish, backed out of *Life of Brian* "for fear of giving offense," and the movie was finally funded by ex-Beatle George Harrison and a partner named Denis O'Brien. Lord Delfont's fears were well-founded. Speaking for Jewish opinion, Rabbi Abraham Hecht, president of the Rabbinical Alliance of America, called the movie a "crime against religion" and warned that its showing "could result in serious violence." He was swiftly joined by Robert E.A. Lee of the Lutheran Council in the U.S.A., who said the film was a "disgraceful and distasteful assault on religious sensitivity." The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of New York called it "an act of blasphemy," and the Catholic OFB gave it a "C" (condemned) rating, meaning it was "forbidden" for American Catholics to see it. But Reverend Arnold Gonzalez of Los Angeles's St. Vibiana Cathedral, although he too found the movie offensive and degrading, said he would not tell his parishioners to stay away. It might "actually bolster their faith," he thought. "Sometimes things like this have a boomerang effect. I would send them to see it."

MOST of this angry criticism was trumpeted prior to the film's release, in apparent anticipation of a hurricane of outrage. But when the film opened, the hurricane never really materialized. There was a tiny smattering of picketing for the first few days at a handful of odd localities throughout the country, but the pickets were ignored by gleeful crowds of young people who flocked into the theaters. There was no violence and there were no angry altercations. Following its national release in the "Bible Belt," the film was quietly withdrawn after protest from seven movie houses, all in the deep South—some 2 per cent of the over 300 houses at which it was playing in the U.S. and Canada. Catholic organizations which two decades before had demonstrated furiously against an Otto Preminger film called *The Moon Is Blue* because a female ingenue in it said, "I'm a virgin," were nowhere in evidence. It was as if a shadow line had been crossed, unnoticed by many of the country's religious leaders. What had been shocking was shocking no longer. The plight of the leaders was reminiscent of that of a priest who wrote to the Philadelphia *Inquirer* protesting against Billy Joel's huge rock hit, *Only the Good Die Young* (five million albums sold), which contains lines like: "You got a nice white dress and a party on your confirmation / You got a brand new soul / And a cross of gold / But . . . you didn't count on me / When you were counting on your rosary." Didn't the record company realize, the priest demanded in his letter, that these lines were offensive to Catholics? Then, suddenly veering and jettisoning his own proposition, he ended by writing, "The trouble is, Catholics aren't even offended."

A consecration of sorts for *Life of Brian,* if not from heartland America at least from the America of the supermarkets, was a spread in *People* magazine on Graham Chapman, who stars in the film as "Brian of Nazareth." In one shot he is shown debonairly "walking on water" in swimming trunks in a pool in the Hollywood Hills. In a still from the movie we see him with his screen mother. The caption reads: ". . . Graham Chapman's mother, Terry Jones (above, right), snarls 'piss off' when questioned about her virginity."

BUT let us now examine *Life of Brian,* described by one of its authors as "a film about suburban England, cleverly disguised as a biblical epic with expensive sets and costumes."

Before the credits: the night sky over Bethlehem. Three Wise Men on camels are silhouetted against the heavens, following a star. The Wise Men make their way through the deserted streets of an Oriental town, dismount at a stable, and, magnificently attired, enter a manger, where they find the Virgin Mandy with her infant in a crib of straw. Announcing that they have come from the East to praise the infant, they are inhospitably received by Mandy (played in the tradition of the "dame" in British pantomime by a man) who declares, "You're all drunk!" They give her presents of gold, frankincense, and myrrh, however, and she becomes silkily receptive, asking only, "What's myrrh anyway?" She tells them the infant's name is Brian and they worship him for a bit ("Oh, Brian, who are Lord over us all. . .") and then they're on their way, with Mandy calling after them jauntily, "Well, if you're dropping by again, do pop in!" But the Wise Men return more quickly than she expects—in merely a few seconds—and snatch their presents back over her howled protests, proceeding hastily to the manger next door, where, bathed in a divine light, we see the true Mary and Joseph, with halos, bending over the crib of the Infant Jesus. And the main title sequence comes on, with the title song swelling up. "Brian . . . the babe they called Brian."

So that much is settled. This is not the story of Jesus, you see, but of a Jewish lad named Brian Cohen who just happened to be born in the manger next door.

In the first scene after the titles, which takes place in 33 C. E., on Saturday afternoon at "about tea time," we see Jesus (the true Jesus) preaching the Sermon on the Mount. "Blessed are those of gentle spirit. They shall have the earth for their possession." But the camera pulls back and back through an enormous crowd, Jesus' voice growing fainter, until we are on another hillside at the far rear of the throng, where we find the grown Brian of Nazareth (Chapman), clearly something of an innocent, and his mother Mandy (Jones), straining with the rest of the assemblage to hear Jesus' words. "What did he say?" asks someone. "Blessed are the cheesemakers? What's so special about cheesemakers?" To which a well-to-do Jerusalemite replies disdainfully, "It's not meant to be applied literally, obviously it

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refers to any manufacturers of dairy products."

Despite the message of peace being preached by Jesus, quarreling breaks out among the spectators. "Do you mind? I can't hear a word he's saying!" "Don't 'do you mind' me! I'm talking to my husband!" Words lead to blows and Mandy, sick of it all, drags Brian off to a stoning, which promises to be much more fun. Here (in the scene which so offended Rabbi Hecht) a man is to be stoned to death for having uttered the sacred name, "Jehovah." In the hurly-burly of restraining the eager stoners while explaining the crime, the judge-prosecutor lets the word "Jehovah" slip out and it is *he* who is stoned.

Strolling away afterward through Jerusalem, Brian and his mother (Mandy rambling on that all her meek-seeming son thinks about is sex) encounter an "ex-leper" (Michael Palin). A spry, nimble young man in perfect health, speaking ebullient cockney, he has just been cured of his leprosy by Jesus and is extremely put out. "One minute I'm a leper with a trade, next moment me livelihood's gone!" he complains. "Not so much as a by-your-leave. [Imitates Jesus]: 'You're cured, mate. Sod you!' Bloody do-gooder!" Brian suggests helpfully that he ask Jesus to make him a leper again. The ex-leper brightens, reflecting, "Just a bit lame in one leg during the week, something beggable—but not leprosy, which is a pain in the arse to be quite blunt, sir, excuse my French." The passage ends with Brian lamenting, "There's no pleasing some people." To which the ex-leper replies, "That's just what Jesus said!"

In a key scene that follows, the Virgin Mandy informs Brian of the delicate truth that his suspiciously absent father wasn't Mr. Cohen but a Roman centurion. "Promised me the known world, he did," she says. "A house by the forum, slaves, as much gold as I could eat." Stung by the fact that he is not a pure-blooded Hebrew, Brian, compensating, joins the People's Front of Judea, a nationalist-revolutionary movement dedicated to the overthrow of Roman rule. The bulk of the film is divided between Brian's escapades as a revolutionary and those when, to his own discomfort, he is mistaken by the populace for the Messiah.

THE film's pattern is a classic one in burlesque of any revered literary or theatrical form: the introduction of utterly realistic, modern, even pettily modern characters and motivations into the traditional genre, thereby robbing it of its mysteries and exposing its conventions to the light of modern thinking. This was Cervantes's technique for mocking medieval romance in *Don Quixote,* and the approach is still serviceable. The Monte Pythons are not only modern, of course, but quintessentially British. Pontius Pilate is played as an aristocratic London society twit; the other characters, if more plebeian, are done with accents equally specific. When Brian develops an erotic liaison and is discovered by his mother in bed with a naked female Judean revolutionary, Mandy cries, "Leave that Welsh tart alone!" Whereas, naturally, it is not the Judean revolutionary who is Welsh, but the actress, Sue Jones-Davis.

The members of the Monte Python group—all five of whose leading performers are graduates of either Oxford or Cambridge—have been swearing up and down to anyone who will listen that their film is not intended as a travesty of the life of Christ. "My feelings toward Christ," says Terry Jones, who directs and plays the Virgin Mandy, "are that he was a bloody good bloke, even though he wasn't as funny as Margaret Thatcher." The original intention, they admit, back when the project was called *Jesus Christ, Lust for Glory,* was to deal with Jesus more directly. But when they had reread the Gospels and commentaries and historical studies they decided that Jesus himself wasn't very good material for comedy. They tried out the idea of Jesus attempting to reserve a table for the Last Supper, saying, "Book it in the name of the Lord," and being told he could have only two tables for four people and one for five, but rejected it as "too easy," too slight. They next considered making the story of the thirteenth disciple, who arrives too late to see Jesus turn the water into wine, and misses the Last Supper because his wife is having people in to dinner that night, but rejected this, too.

It seemed that as long as they stayed close to Jesus, the comic pickings were too thin (and the blasphemy, perhaps, too stark). Also, says John Cleese (who plays "Reg," leader of the People's Front of Judea, as well as Pontius Pilate's chief centurion): "The Bible story itself just doesn't wash. Too many loose ends and inconsistencies, especially about Jesus Christ. At Sunday School, we learned that he was the meekest of men, but he raised holy hell in the temple, virtually demolished the place." (To which he adds, "And what about the time Mary comes to him and says, 'I am your mother,' and he says, 'Piss off, I have no mother, no family'? This is a picture of a man who's totally alienated from his mum!") So Jesus, except for his brief appearances an an infant and in the Sermon on the Mount, was dropped from the story entirely in favor of this other Jew born in the manger next door.

IT must urgently be pointed out, however, that although the Monte Python group's attitude toward Christianity is highly irreverent at the very least, *Life of Brian* contains appreciably more mocking of faddish radicalism and Third World "national-liberation movements" than it does of religion. In a secret meeting of the anti-Roman People's Front of Judea, leader Reg thunders, *"What have the Romans ever done for us?"* To which, in fairness, the thin voice of a fellow member pipes up, "The aqueduct?" Reg grudgingly acknowledges that the Romans did build an aqueduct. But this is followed by another exception: sanitation. And another: the roads. Still others follow: irrigation, medicine, education, health, public baths, public order. "All right, all right," sulkily grants Reg, but still acting as if his argument is a great crowd winner, "But apart from the aqueduct and better sanitation and medicine and education and irrigation and public health and roads and a fresh-water system and baths and public order, *what have the Romans ever done for us?"*

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Or again: when Brian seeks to join the militant People's Front of Judea, the members confess darkly that the only people they hate more than the Romans are the Judean People's Front. And the Judean Popular People's Front. And the People's Front of Judea. "Wait a minute," a member objects. "We're the People's Front of Judea." "Are we?" says the other. "I thought we were the Popular Front. Whatever happened to the Popular Front, Reg?" "He's over there," says Reg, and they all turn to a lone Hebrew sitting by himself on the nearby seats of a Roman amphitheater and cry, "Splitter!"

The group also runs into the feminist problem even as they phrase a resolution: "It is the inalienable right of every man. . . ." A member named Stan interrupts, "Or woman." "Or woman," Reg continues, "to rid himself—" Stan interrupts again, "Or herself." "Or herself," Reg resumes, "thank you, brother." "Or sister," Stan says. "Why don't you shut up about women, Stan, you're putting us off!" they cry. "Why are you always on about women?" "Because I want to be one," says Stan petulantly, "I want you to call me Loretta." The members are finally reduced to addressing each other as "sibling" and the session ends with the group agreeing that, although Stan can't have babies, it should demand that the Roman oppressor recognize his *right* to have babies.

Or yet again: when it comes time to plot a terrorist kidnapping, the group plans to snatch Pontius Pilate's wife, giving Pilate forty-eight hours to "dismantle the entire apparatus of the Roman Imperialist State" before they begin cutting off bits of Mrs. Pilate and sending them back every hour on the hour, while declaring adamantly that the Romans bear "full responsibility when we chop her up and that we shall not submit to blackmail!"

Now the fact that it concentrates so much of its fire on left-wing ideas about imperialism, feminism, and terrorism, doesn't mean that *Life of Brian* does not also proceed from a highly irreligious attitude. It does. For example, the film's last scene, which has shocked Christian churchmen the most, shows Brian and a number of other undesirables crucified in a parody of a Busby Berkeley musical production number, with all those on crosses tapping their feet to the music and singing, "Look on the Bright Side of Life." Of course, the Romans did in fact crucify countless people—six thousand along the Appian Way after the Spartacus rebellion alone. But to most Christians, Christ's was the only crucifixion, and in any case Brian's life resembles that of Jesus rather more than that of Spartacus: born in Bethlehem; in a manger; a "Virgin" for a mother (much is made of this, a voice from an assembled crowd crying, "If it's not a personal question, are you a virgin?" To which Mandy replies, " 'If it's not a personal question.' How much more personal can you get! Piss off!" and the crowd comments in unison, "She is. Yeah. Definitely"); a career as a (reluctant) prophet; the doing of a miracle; devoted followers, who hail him as the Messiah; arrested by the Romans; Pontius Pilate giving the Jerusalem mob the choice of a prisoner to free; and finally the crucifixion. In addition, when Brian preaches. he speaks in a clear and obvious parody of Christ's specific sermons and parables as given in the Christian Gospels ("Consider the lilies . . . have they got jobs?").

Further, when Brian, fleeing from his fanatic followers, loses his sandal, the followers immediately split into different camps. Some say the sandal is a "sign" and they should treasure it, do reverence to their sandals. Others proclaim that they should do as Brian, and cast *off* their sandals. They argue as to whether it is a shoe or a sandal. One says they should wear one shoe and carry one, following his example in this way. Some choose to revere his gourd, and call themselves Gourdenes, to distinguish themselves from the Sandalites and the Shoe-ites. A heretic is persecuted. When Brian disappears for a moment, they all cry, "He's been taken up! . . . [spotting him scurrying away] No, there he is." (Referring to all the wrangling and dissension and splitting into contending parties. Jones, the director, says, "It's a bit like a three-minute history of the Church.")

The great British comic actor Spike Milligan, in a brief cameo performance as a Hebrew divine, calls out, "Let us pray!" to the milling, turbulent throng. Eyes closed and arms raised, he calls a second time, "Let us pray." But when he opens his eyes for a peek he sees that the motley horde, rushing along after Brian, has left him standing alone and, with no one to pray but himself, he walks off sheepishly. Finally cornered by the crowd shouting, "Hail, Messiah!" Brian cries desperately, "I am *not* the Messiah. Will you please listen? Honestly!" To which the crowd replies, "Only the true Messiah denies his divinity." At last, absolutely disgusted, Brian explodes, "All right! I *am* the Messiah! . . . Now fuck off!" There is a long pause before a leading member of the crowd asks reverently, "How shall we fuck off, O, Lord?" ("We've got to maintain a certain level of offense," says Python Terry Gilliam blithely. "Otherwise we're just entertainers; it's one way of proving to ourselves that we're not just in it for the money.")

YET irreligious though all this undoubtedly is, even those passages in the film which concern Brian as a reluctant Messiah contain much political comment. When a tumultuous crowd gathers outside his mother's house, Brian appeals to it, "Look, you've got it all wrong. You don't need to follow me. You don't need to follow anybody. You've got to think for yourselves. You're all individuals!" The mindless crowd thunders in unison, *"Yes, we're all individuals."* Brian cries, "You're all different!" Again the crowd thunders, *"We're different. . . . Tell us more."* Much distressed, Brian pleads, "No, no! That's the point! Don't let anyone tell you what to do. . . . You've all got to work it out for yourselves!" To Brian's despair, once again the crowd thunders in perfect unison: *"Yes! We've got to work it out for ourselves."*

In keeping with the superimposing of political and religious comment, John Cleese, a leading mem-

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ber of the Python group, says: "I often wonder how we came to adopt such a morbid, masochistic religion as Christianity. . . . Gentle Jesus, meek and mild, what bullshit. The man was a renegade. . . . That's why they strung him up. He was a revolutionary."*

WHAT we have in *Life of Brian,* then, is a strain of satirical comedy that is largely absent from American comedy: the tradition of what might be called "Tory wit," reaching back to Congreve and Swift and all the way forward to Evelyn Waugh and Kingsley Amis. American comics of the younger generation, when their work has any political content at all, direct their barbs almost exclusively at conservative authority figures (the film *Animal House* and the TV show *Saturday Night Live* are two examples). To be sure, British satirical comedians, including the Monte Python group, regularly let fly at establishment figures as well: royalty, aristocracy, the House of Lords, almost any Briton who has the presumption to ascend to cabinet rank. The difference is that in *Life of Brian,* as in British comedy generally, the Left is far from sacrosanct. Where in American comedy are the parodies of the Jane Fondas and Bernadine Dohrns and Angela Davises and Abbie Hoffmans and Bella Abzugs and Cesar Chavezes—not to mention the Stokely Carmichaels and Rap Browns? While the noble Idi Amin still ruled Uganda, Britain's John Bird recorded a hilarious parody of him (". . . wantin' to get to the point because I *already* overdue for a couple of shootin's and a bit of the old toenail pullin'!"). American entertainment, however, still operates under severely pious inhibitions in the area of race as well as politics.

Americans tend to think that irreligiosity and anti-clericalism are incompatible with a Tory-type sensibility, but that they can coexist comfortably is clear not only from the example of England but also from France, the great precursor nation for irreligiosity in entertainment. In 1871, at the birth of the Third Republic, the Catholic Church made the grave mistake of opposing the new republican form of government in favor of the monarchy, earning the bitter enmity of the triumphant new regime and exposing the Church to a generation of the most unrelenting attacks from the men who controlled the entire apparatus of the new state, men of wealth, power, and a fervent nationalism—but "republicans." A young lawyer named Georges Clemenceau was one of the most ardent and aggressive leaders of this anti-clerical movement.

Decade after decade of this harrying of the Church, in the press, in the schools, in the theater, even in the celebrated *Encyclopédie Larousse*—a devastating *instrument de combat* in its day—produced a society in which anti-clericalism and irreligiosity have been so absorbed into the national consciousness that an anti-clerical joke in the music hall is often the easiest laugh an entertainer can get. A few years ago one of Paris's greatest and most respectable theaters gave a sumptuous production of Oscar Panizza's legendary *The Council of Love,* in the first act of which a choleric God, a bossy Virgin Mary, and a comically neurasthenic Jesus Christ sit about fretting over Pope Alexander Borgia's libertine ways. After a conference with the Devil they decide to give Alexander, and mankind, syphilis. Similarly, in a French music hall, with Christ hanging from a basketball backboard on stage, I have seen a basketball thrown through the crown of thorns as if it were the hoop, to the guffaws and cheers of the audience.

During the opening years of the Third Republic there were a number of social conservatives who, free thinkers themselves, feared that, the Church being a force for social cohesion, its weakening would weaken the fabric of society at large. (This ran counter to another analysis, however, according to which as religion waned, nationalism would gain as a cohesive force.) In any event, since the same anti-clerical Georges Clemenceau—become "The Tiger," the inspirational leader of the nation at war—maintained the cohesion of French society with a will of iron even during the frightful carnage of the Great War of 1914-18, the notion that anti-clericalism is inimical to patriotism has not been much heard of in France.

Unlike the French experience, irreligiosity in the United States and Britain has not been the result of the concerted onslaught of a strong political party but simply of the gradual withering away of religious faith. Hence the success of *Life of Brian.* But its flippant attitude toward religion has concealed from many the fact that the film skins alive some of the more fashionable notions of the modish Left. If Christianity is desanctified, by *Life of Brian,* so are the PLO and the IRA. And audiences are laughing.

* Interestingly, this view of Jesus as a secular rebel brings Cleese, at least, into rough accordance with a traditional Jewish view of Jesus, a view that has in recent years been supported by a number of works of Christian scholarship, particularly Professor S.G.F. Brandon's *Jesus and the Zealots* and *The Trial of Jesus of Nazareth.* Although the Monte Pythons maintain that Brian of Nazareth is not Jesus of Nazareth, and that Jesus is not Brian, it would be surprising if this view of Jesus as a political rebel didn't shape the Pythons' comic story of the Jew born in the manger next door. And it is curious to think of the Monte Pythons, entertainers responding to the secular spirit of the times, and Professor Brandon, proceeding from biblical scholarship (but also not unaware of the social changes of the 20th century), arriving at congruent pictures of Jesus—divine or not—as a nationalist insurgent.

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Books in Review

The Way It Wasn't

RESTORING THE AMERICAN DREAM. By ROBERT I. RINGER. *QED, Harper & Row. 306 pp. $12.50.*

Reviewed by WILLIAM J. BENNETT

A very great deal of publicity and praise has welcomed Robert Ringer's new book. Full-page ads in the New York *Times* offer testimony to the importance of *Restoring the American Dream*. Richard Ney, author of *The Wall Street Jungle,* calls the book "persuasive and powerful"; former NBC president Jack Thayer says it is "exciting reading" and "an eye-opening, mind-boggling exposé"; the conservative economist Henry Hazlitt regards it as "eloquent, persuasive, and powerful." Strong as these statements are, well-known conservative intellectuals have made even grander claims. On the basis of the book, R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr., editor of the *American Spectator,* has recommended Ringer for a Congressional Medal of Honor (an award which would not exist, for lack of a sponsoring body, if Ringer's advice were followed); the editor of *Reason,* Manuel Klausner, says that *Restoring the American Dream* "is one of the most powerful statements for individual liberty since the Declaration of Independence"; and strongest of all, the philosopher John Hospers believes that "the very survival of our country may well depend on how much the public takes to heart the message of Mr. Ringer's book." On the strength of these, and other testimonials updated weekly in ads in major newspapers, and of the apparent appeal of Ringer's thesis, *Restoring the American Dream* has found itself near the top of the best-seller list.

What is it that Ringer says to have brought forward such a windstorm of praise and accolade? He presents a chain of straightforward and indubitable propositions which make up the logical core of the American Dream. Among the propositions are the following: there is Natural Law and it posits "total freedom" for man; that is, "each man owns his own life and has the right to do anything he wishes with that life so long as he doesn't commit aggression—aggression is force or fraud or the threat of force or fraud." Natural Law dictates, again self-evidently, that individual liberty is higher than all other objectives. From these few but simple truths, certain conclusions follow, most of them about government, the book's target. Among them: nothing the government says is true; "a man's freedom to do what he wishes can never be compromised"; "the difference between Natural Law and government law *is* that Natural Law demands freedom, while government law demands that certain men obey other men"; government is a freedom-robbing conspiracy of "industrious individualists" (who made a mistake in agreeing to the necessity of government) and those who want power over others; "all governments are totalitarian and authoritarian" (the Soviet Union is only extreme totalitarianism); majority rule is a violation of Natural Law ("The most important person in the country is you. *In your life you are the majority*"); and the now-familiar idea, the System works for those in power.

Certain other beliefs, although not indubitable propositions, are friendly to the axioms of Natural Law and render groundless any "liberal" criticism of *The American Dream*. Ringer asserts, for example, that government restraint really is not necessary because "most men and women are basically good" and would not prey on their fellows if government disappeared. He says that unlike such terms as "Natural Law" and "liberty," whose meanings are crystal clear, terms like "the common good," "duty," "decent," "fair," "needs," "price gouging," and "greed" are all "subjective" and do not mean anything at all. It follows that there is no logical authority or legitimacy behind regulation of pornography, water purity, education, homosexuality, the use of property, and, of course, the conduct of business or corporate affairs.

Since the American Dream belongs to the American people, Ringer calls upon his readers to "take back America" and restore a government-less harmony. But this taking back (which is a restoration) requires of the individual, as Buddhism does, a certain series of acts of self-purification, necessary to return oneself to the rational rule of Natural Law. One must "wage a personal battle against any traces of envy that have a hold on you"; "never go out of your way to cooperate with government"; "make an unwavering commitment to become fiercely independent and individualistic"; and "not think of yourself as part of a group" ("grouping is irrational and degrading"). Ringer closes with his own personal vision of a "restored" America: "I do not want to relate to you as a competitor. . . . I want to relate to you as a neighbor."

PUTTING aside for the moment the issue of the appeal of all this to many people, the first thing that must be said is that whatever dream Ringer aims to restore, it is not the American one. In one sentence from *Federalist* No. 10, the difference between the Ringer version and the American version is made clear: "The regulation of various and interfering interests forms the principal task of modern legislation and involves the spirit of party and faction in the necessary and ordinary operations of government." Thus the architects of the American system take regulation, government, "grouping," and self-interest to be the facts of life within which the American Dream

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is to be sought. There is no naiveté about "the basic goodness of man" or about "Natural Law." Moreover, since in the Founders' view "liberty is to faction what air is to fire" and liberty is to be protected, there is no hope that neighborliness will replace competition.

The American Dream as envisioned by the Founding Fathers (whom Ringer wishes to call to his side) knows nothing of a simple harmony, man to man, in the past or the future, in a rule of Natural Law. *Federalist* No. 6, anticipating Ringer, calls such a notion a dream indeed—not the American Dream, however, but "the deceitful dream of a golden age." Rejecting such "idle theory," the Founders' version values liberty highly, is dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal, and insists that government has a significant role in the nurture and protection of these and other values—among them majority rule with attention to the rights of minorities and the necessary adjustment and regulation by government of competing interests.

A simple check of the index to Ringer's book can save the reader the trouble of wondering whose dream this really is. There is only one reference to James Madison, but it is not only of no help to Ringer—it is disastrous to his thesis. Madison is quoted from *Federalist* No. 51: "In framing a government which is to be administered by men over men, the great difficulty lies in this: you must first enable the government to control the governed; and in the next place, oblige it to control itself." So eager is he to get to what comes after the semicolon that Ringer ignores what lies in front of it. And Madison aside, there are no references to Jefferson, Adams, Franklin. But there are six references to Murray Rothbard, six to Ayn Rand, and seven to someone named Sy Leon. Clearly, it is more toward certain right-wing orthodoxies of the mid-20th century than to the visions of the era of 1776-87 that the restoration is aimed.

If Ringer's is not the American Dream and his title is fraudulent, is it yet plausible that his is a better dream than the American one? If not, and if there is nothing to be said for it, how are we to account for its popularity and the proclamations made in its behalf? Several points can be made about these related questions. First, the book's popularity with the general public will prove to be evanescent. The book has yet to be critically examined. When it is examined, its illiterate utopianism will be revealed and rejected by all but true believers. Second, it is the sort of book that is handed out to the faithful by the faithful, and the strongest words of praise for it, praise for its libertarian philosophy, come principally from libertarians and camp followers. This is not surprising; every anthropologist loves his tribe, and when one of the boys learns how to sing, however badly, the chiefs and the anthropologists will applaud. Third, the book begins with and cashes in on a widespread and understandable dissatisfaction with government; it does seem at present that in some areas government can neither "control the governed" nor "control itself." Perceived accurately enough as the source of some unhappiness and inefficiency, government is here made the source of *all* unhappiness in a venerable though unsuccessful scapegoating argument. (Consider: since women sometimes make men unhappy, men should have nothing to do with women.) Fourth, the book has appeal because it says that selfishness and greed are subjective terms and cannot be used to distinguish among men or to make judgments about their actions. The book tells people they have no obligations of charity or of consideration to others, and this, among some people, is *always* a sound view.

Finally, to "intellectuals," the book's theorems hail from that currently appealing, never-never, cloud-cuckoo land of modern philosophy. Whereas in other, more sober periods an audience of readers would simply put the book down after reading the first of its Indubitable Axioms from Natural Law, properly judging them to be "idle theories," today's audience is softened to this sort of thing by the *au courant* style of modern philoso-

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phy, with its large assortment of Ringeroid trappings: Original Positions, Fundamental Axioms, and the like.

What's sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander. If the Left can posit absurd perspectives from which to criticize the practice of liberal democracy, so too, as we now discover, can the Right. Once our visionary philosophers have opened the way to the criticism of reality with an intellectual fulcrum located somewhere in outer space, then anyone can play and anything goes. In a game of nonsense on stilts, whatever turns you on can be called Natural Law and whatever you would like to have you can call the true American Dream; what gets in the way you can define out of existence, simply by saying it is "subjective." Thus, if nothing else, Ringer can claim, with the German artist whose work never found success: "At least I am a contemporary." Indeed. And unlike his mirror-image counterparts on the Left, he has done it without a Ph.D.

The Literary Life

A LION FOR LOVE: A CRITICAL BIOGRAPHY OF STENDHAL. By ROBERT ALTER with the collaboration of CAROL COSMAN. *Basic Books. 285 pp. $13.95.*

Reviewed by ROBERT M. ADAMS

STENDHAL is an acquired taste but one not easy to sate; it's the special happiness of the French that so many of their students of the novelist have not only appreciated his rare qualities, but possessed a few of those qualities themselves. Jean Prévost, Alain, Paul Arbelet, François Michel, Henri Martineau, and Vittorio del Litto—to name only a few of the leading Beylistes—have brought to the investigation of their favorite author's life and sentiments such a mingling of factual precision with sympathetic delicacy as expands the happy reader's horizons almost indefinitely. When he has exhausted the 79 volumes of the Divan edition, he may wander on through volume after volume of commentary without losing the flavor of that wise and witty friend, the mature Stendhal. The full biography is rarely attempted under two volumes; the friends and mistresses and separate periods of Beyle's life all have historians of their own; the study of his marginal notes is a science in itself, and early 19th-century Parma is the subject of investigation because he wrote a book partly about it. Men are still to be found who will play the game of quotations from *Le rouge et le noir*—as if that novel, modeled stylistically on the Code Napoléon. were a sacred text which it would be shameful not to know by heart.

English readers have, naturally, been more restricted. Most of the novels have by now been converted into Saxon, along with the autobiography, a selection of the letters, and a selection of the journals. We have had numbers of introductory studies and appreciations, but the one biography in English has been that of Matthew Josephson, a remarkably heavy-minded and clumsily written performance when it appeared in 1946, and not at all improved by the thirty-odd years of its aging. The new book of Robert Alter (written with the collaboration of Carol Cosman) aims to supplant Josephson and to add some of the critical perspectives which have come to the fore in recent years; it too is introductory in character, presuming very little in the way of previous acquaintance with the literature, and perforce treading over many well-trodden paths. Yet, though it does not rival or even represent the depth and complexity of the work available in France, the new book far outstrips that of Josephson. No literary biography should be allowed in the hands of a reader who has not already read the main books of the author whose life is being recounted. But for anyone who knows the *Rouge* and the *Chartreuse*, Alter's book will provide a handy *vade mecum* to future reading and a useful survey of a pretty overwhelming quantity of complex circumstance.

Coverage is the first and greatest problem of any biographer of Beyle/Stendhal; to achieve coverage, which is indispensable, the biographer is always in danger of sacrificing complexities, which are merely crucial. The novelist's fifty-nine years were thickly layered with incidents and fantasies, scratchings after a living, abortive and successful literary ventures, a vigorous love life, a various sex life (sometimes congruent these two, more often not), political ambiguities combined with extreme sensitivity to the changing political weather—incessant movement from place to place, and a devotion to revaluation and reconsideration which ultimately bestows on the smallest gesture as many facets and interpretations as a well-cut diamond. Many of those 79 volumes are devoted to self-dissection and self-analysis (which does not preclude self-contradiction). Indeed, Stendhal lays out so much of his inner life in his various memoirs, autobiographies, fictions, and recollections that biographers are occasionally reduced to transcribing what Beyle himself has told them, or to correcting his interpretations of his own data—an ungraceful posture, indeed. (What makes them think their own motivation isn't far more suspect than Beyle's?) A special problem with Stendhal is that fragments of experience from the earlier part of his life, after resting inert within his mind for twenty years or so, will sometimes turn up, disguised, transformed, and endowed with a wonderful new energy, in the later fictions. He was a complex and busy character, whose apparent loose ends can often be knotted up in remarkable ways; the best work on him combines, I think, respect for facts, contempt for systems, and patience in sorting out patterns. Loving *petits faits vrais* himself, he left to posterity a generous supply, with the cheerful intimation that the happy few would know what to make of them. They have been busy ever since.

THE latest big burst of Stendhal studies came just after the war, when existentialism (whatever happened to existentialism anyway?)

ROBERT M. ADAMS *is the author of* Stendhal: Notes on a Novelist, *and other works of literary and cultural criticism. His new book,* The Lost Museum, *will be published by Viking next spring.*

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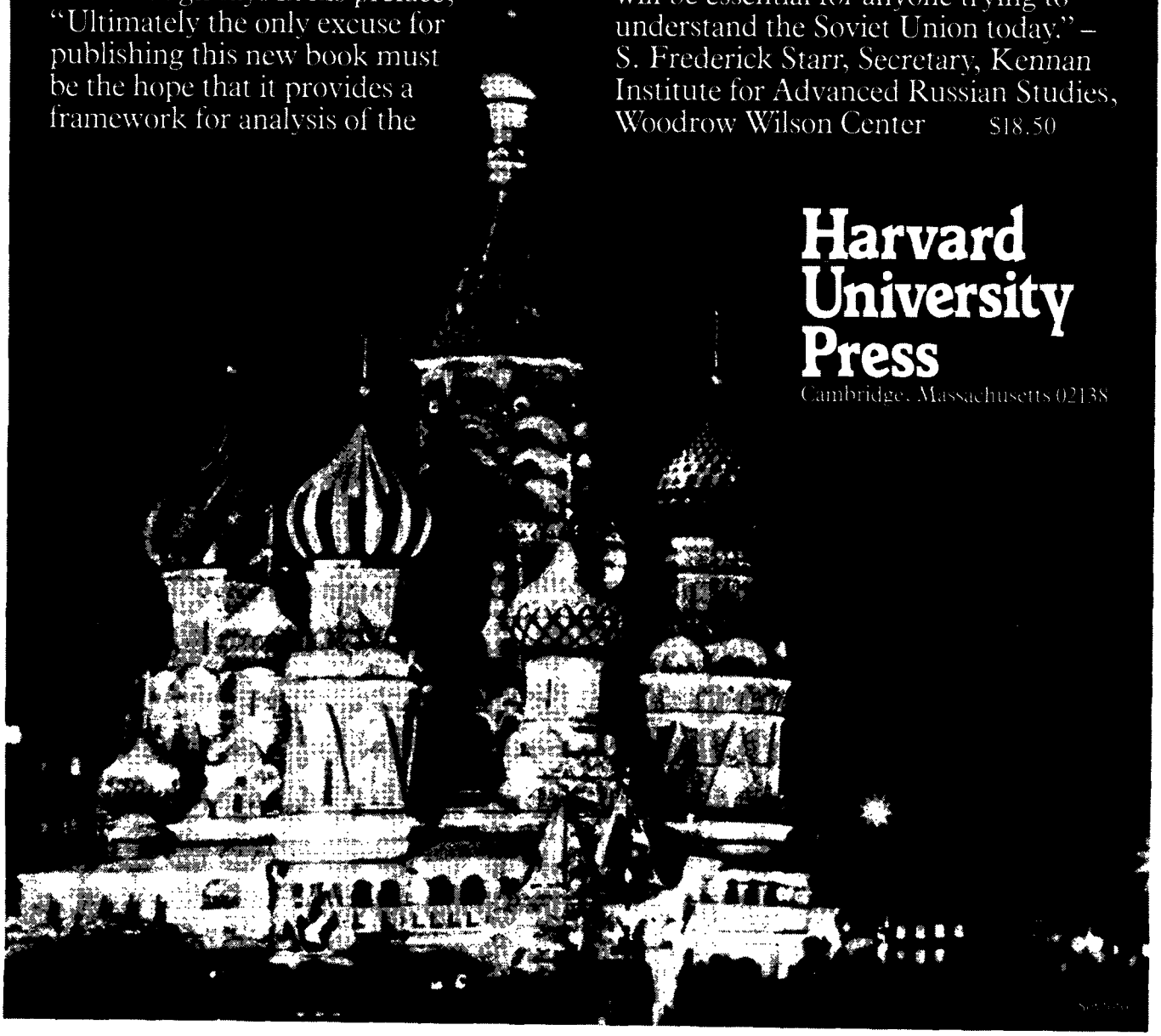

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was much in the air; to readers of those dark ages, it was the loneliness, the self-centeredness, and the deliberate hypocrisy of heroes like Julien Sorel, Fabrizio del Dongo, and Lucien Leuwen that was most appealing. A parallel was evidently felt between peace-of-Vienna Europe, where a simple glint of intelligence in a person's eye could be interpreted as dangerous liberalism, and life in totalitarian society, of which France had just had a bitter dose. A hypocritical hero, as opposed to a mere hypocritical protagonist like Tartuffe or his English scion Sir Willoughby Patterne, offers particularly intriguing potentialities to an analytical novelist and a reader susceptible to challenge. How deeply must we probe, not just in the characters, but in ourselves, to find gleams of sympathetic understanding? Julien in the seminary at Besançon, grimly practicing the art of eating a boiled egg in a devout manner, is like Fabrizio confessing his sins to God in a heartfelt outburst after the killing of Giletti, but never pausing a moment to think of simony, the sin in which he is most deeply immersed, and which has just led him to commit a murder. Both heroes are problems for the reader because he has been given all the materials for a judgment which is flagrantly wrong—and in that predicament, by a heartless author, he is simply abandoned. The character does not implore our sympathy. The author makes no apologies, nor does he seem to turn his hero about to show off his "points." Where he can, he analyzes and explains; he is very good at this, and his explanations are not put forward to be dismissed or seen through—yet they always fall short. If the reader is to follow the fiction with a full heart, he must do it on his own.

Méfiance, or defiant mistrust on the part of Stendhal's heroes, has its counterpart in the instinctive, much analyzed, and still mysterious *pudeur* of his heroines. These paranoiac personages are all on their guard; yet it can't be said that any of them display profound spiritual insights or even unusual sensitivities, while of ideas in the form of reasoned convictions they are almost ostentatiously innocent. Happiness is for most of them something childish and very natural, discovered incidentally or accidentally, most often when two or three are gathered together in the name of—what? a communion too evanescent and unstable even to be stamped with a name. Fabrizio in his solitary midnight grove by Lake Como clarifying the turbid waters of his passion for the Duchessa Sanseverina, Julien chasing butterflies with Mme. de Rênal and her children at Vergy, are emulating, if anyone, the happiness of Rousseau on his lake isle of Bienne. The famous fifth revery of the solitary stroller describes the mind released from the pressures of society and circumstance and intention, cradled in the flux and reflux of the universe and the no less rhythmic and

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soothing motion of its own constitution. Such in its general character is the supreme happiness of the Stendhal protagonist—a happiness not of performance or of ideas, but precisely of release from both, a moment of airy introspection and delight, in which height and depth are paradoxically one. The pursuit of such happiness is not simply a footrace but a hunt which includes much vigilant waiting for the rare appearance of a creature not very susceptible of domestication. Once glimpsed, it can only be put away, out of reach of the rational mind and the dusty world, to undergo the mysterious process of crystallization, leading perhaps to the greatest and least calculable mystery of all, resurrection.

How thoroughly Stendhal's mind was saturated with the religion in which he professed to disbelieve! His most exalted heroes are of wonderfully muddled parentage, children obviously of the spirit more than the flesh; like Dionysus before being raised, they are imprisoned beneath walls of triple brass: (1) literally, in dungeons; (2) politically, by reactionary rulers rendered irresistible by the fact that liberals, true liberals, and even true-blue liberals are all as rascally as the ultras and trimmers; (3) professionally, in cassock and gown, when essentially they are soldiers; (4) socially and temporally, in the costumes and customs of the 19th century, when spiritually they are of the 16th; (5) intellectually, within the cocoon of an ideology which, even when they respect it, freezes their veins; and (6) temperamentally, behind the mask of their own practiced *méfiance*, and what is more deadly, that of their author.

Yet they rise from these many sepulchers and are transfigured, as we are allowed to see through the eyes of that cenacle of faithful women who are the traditional last ministrants and witnesses of the dying resurrected god. Such is Stendhal's art of insinuation and suggestion which in this and many other particulars teases us with the possibility of a parallel, yet puts all the weight of it on the reader. The better the reader, the greater the weight, which isn't at all to say the heavier the parallel. Other poten-

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tial weights in the narrative Stendhal controls by making, with unparalleled boldness, a series of transverse cuts in the narrative line and in the structuring of attitudes. The author doesn't puff to swell the impetus of his tale, but cuts into it with crisp, dry observations coming from a distance. They sometimes have the effect of a retro-narrative: as, for instance, when Julien Sorel, about to enter the seminary, stops in a café and is served by Amanda Binet. Leaning over the counter, she reveals a *"taille superbe."* "Julien observed this," says the author crisply; "all his ideas changed." *Toutes ses idées changèrent*; if we are conscientious readers, we will have to go back over the first twenty-three chapters to accommodate our first impressions of Julien with this snapshot of a man who, at the mere glimpse of an agreeable bosom, can change all his ideas in six brief syllables. This sort of thing demands special agility of a reader; indeed, the novels span an extraordinarily wide range of moods. The same hero who is a prophetic destroyer and redeemer of society as a whole may take part in a caricature campaign like that of Julien against the Maréchale de Fervaques—scenes which remind us, in their capering. skeletonized grotesquerie, of one of Voltaire's *contes*. Such, or something like this, are a few of the complexities of Stendhal's major fiction; the books are tests for equilibrists, and after many readings remain unstable and iridescent in the mind.

NOT to belabor a cliché, the fictions avowed and unavowed are the radiant heart of Stendhal's fifty-nine years on earth. No doubt we can never know too much of the man who was capable of forming them. But between the biographical raw materials of the great novels and the vision itself, there is a distance hardly to be measured in units smaller than light-years. The stories of Beyle's turbulent pursuit and capture of Gina Pietragrua, his first Milanese playmate, and of his less fortunate campaign to take the heart of Mathilde Dembowski, can hardly be told except in terms of amused derision. How the former was metamorphosed into the mobile, glittering Duchessa Sanseverina, while the latter became that arrogant little necrophiliac Mathilde de la Mole, no biographer can hope fully to explain. By its very nature, biography tends to put in the foreground Beyle, the chubby government bureaucrat with his succession of unimportant assignments and even longer list of fleeting mistresses and casual acquaintances. Mr. Alter in his new book works the fiction in with the events of the life, making use predominantly of Freudian tie-ins. Neither the criticism nor the biography will startle anyone familiar with the previous literature. The author is particularly good, it seemed to me, on the *Chartreuse*, where he manipulates the parallels with musical composition discreetly yet appreciatively. But in all he assigns to each of the two major novels fewer than fifteen pages, in which to describe their origins, the process of their composition, their structure and thematics, as well as their critical reception. Naturally, the commentary appears thin. Mere quantity might not matter so much, were the author himself a more deft and polished stylist. Alas, and once more, alas. Too often simple ideas have to be dug out of a thick impasto of academic jargon, blue-jeans American informality, and mixed metaphors:

> Instead of living in clover, then, as a French diplomat in Italy, Beyle found himself a lame duck paddling through cold waters.
>
> By the fall of 1821, Beyle himself contrived a much more efficacious remedy for his depression than the erotic measures his well-meaning friends had proposed.
>
> This durance vile of early childhood undoubtedly helped make Henri Beyle painfully shy and uncertain in his social relations for many years afterward, but it also provided him with an unforgettable model of the essential bourgeois vice of snobbery, which was the key to the social psychology of an upwardly mobile France after the Restoration of 1815.

Verbally, the book is too often inexact or uncouth; one can't help being struck by slips like "roles" for "rolls" (85), "importunacy" for "importunity" (148), the repeated use of "boudoir" as elegant for "bedroom"; we hear of "the finely distilled residue" of an experience (96) and "the unique tenor that [the *Chartreuse*] has among novels of the age" (26). On page 187 we encounter a "marginalium."

It's a shame that more effort wasn't put into polishing the prose, for Mr. Alter's book is good enough to supersede Josephson without difficulty, and could easily have been better yet. But without a jarring sense of incongruity, it won't stand on the same shelf with Arbelet or Martineau or Pietro Paolo Trompeo; and, though useful as a work of ready reference, it's unlikely to be read as members of the Stendhal Club like to read books about their favorite author, for the sheer, vibrant pleasure of it.

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, AND CIRCULATION

(Act of August 12, 1970; Section 3685, Title 39, United States Code) Date of Filing: September 29, 1979. Title of Publication: Commentary. Frequency of Issue: Monthly. Location of Known Office of Publication: 165 East 56th Street, New York, N.Y. 10022. Location of the Headquarters or General Business Offices of the Publishers: 165 East 56th Street, New York, N.Y. 10022. Publisher: American Jewish Committee, 165 East 56th Street, New York, N.Y. 10022. Editor: Norman Podhoretz, 165 East 56th Street, New York, N.Y. 10022. Managing Editor: Marion Magid, 165 East 56th Street, New York, N.Y. 10022. Owner: American Jewish Committee, 165 East 56th Street, New York, N.Y. 10022 (non-profit membership corporation incorporated by legislature of the State of New York). Known Bond-Holders, Mortgages, and Other Security Holders Owning or Holding 1 percent or More of Total Amount of Bonds, Mortgages, or Other Securities: None. For completion by Non-profit Organizations Authorized to Mail at Special Rates: The purpose, function, and nonprofit status of this organization and the exempt status for Federal income tax purposes have not changed during the preceding 12 months. Extent and Nature of Circulation: A. Total No. Copies Printed (Net Press Run): Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months, 50,222. Single Issue Nearest to Filing Date 49,173. B. Paid Circulation: 1. Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, and Counter Sales: Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months, 6,240. Single Issue Nearest to Filing Date, 6,985. 2. Mail Subscriptions: Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months, 41,039. Single Issue Nearest to Filing Date, 39,795. C. Total Paid Circulation: Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months, 47,279. Single Issue Nearest to Filing Date, 46,780. D. Free Distribution by Mail, Carrier, or Other Means: Samples, Complimentary, and Other Free Copies: Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months, 1,493. 2. Single Issue Nearest to Filing Date, 1,145. E. Total Distribution (Sum of C and D): Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months, 48,772. Single Issue Nearest to Filing Date, 47,925. F. Copies Not Distributed: 1. Office use, Left Over, Unaccounted, Spoiled After Printing: Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months, 1,110. Single Issue Nearest to Filing Date, 1,050. 2. Returns From News Agents: Average No. of Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months, 340. Single Issue Nearest to Filing Date, 198. G. Total (Sum of E and F): Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months, 50,222. Single Issue Nearest to Filing Date, 49,173. I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete. Philip Shamis, Comptroller.

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Israel's Political Fringe

RADICAL DISSENT IN CONTEMPORARY ISRAELI POLITICS. By DAVID J. SCHNALL. *Praeger. 229 pp. $21.95.*

Reviewed by GERALD CROMER

ISRAEL is engaged in a constant struggle for survival. Its very existence is still at stake. Yet strange as it may seem, some people argue that this siege situation has certain advantages. Many Israelis themselves believe that ethnic and religious conflicts have been held in check only by the widely felt need not to rock the boat. It is only the continued presense of a common enemy, they say, which prevents the country from tearing itself apart.

The process of normalization with Egypt, the most powerful of Israel's neighbors, may, to some extent at least, put this rather depressing theory to the test. A book on radical dissent in Israel is therefore particularly timely. Unfortunately, David J. Schnall's study is of limited value. Although it provides a factual background to the present-day Israeli political fringe, it makes no attempt to analyze the dynamics of this increasingly important phenomenon.

Israel, Schnall argues, is characterized by a "broad and far-reaching consensus." Zionist ideology and the institutions to which it gave rise have together insured a wide measure of agreement on the major issues facing the country. There are, however, a growing number of "cracks in the wall." Both the elation in the wake of the Six-Day War of 1967 and the recrimination that followed the Yom Kippur War of 1973 caused a significant increase in radical dissent. Although there are sharp differences of opinion among the dissident groups over both the causes of the malaise in Israeli society and the ways to cure it, all of them are characterized by a profound "alienation from the Zionist mainstream."

Despite, or maybe because of, its small size, the Israeli political fringe consists of a myriad of movements. The seven groups included in the present study are, Schnall suggests, a fair cross-section. In addition, a number of them are particularly important either because of their notoriety (Black Panthers, Gush Emunim) or because of their longevity (Haolam Hazeh, Neturei Karta).

Each movement constitutes the subject matter of a separate chapter. After a brief historical sketch, Schnall deals with each group under three broad headings—world view, values and goals, and strategies for social change (or where we are, where we want to go, and how we can get there). Some of the descriptions are better than others, but on the whole Schnall provides an adequate picture of the Israeli political fringe.

His attempt to place the various

GERALD CROMER, *who teaches criminology at Bar Ilan University and the Hebrew University, is currently at Queens College.*

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groups in a comparative perspective is much less successful. This section of the book consists of a repetition, albeit in a slightly different format, of the facts already given in the description of the individual movements. This shortcoming is undoubtedly due to the limitation that the author himself set on the study. Its aim, he points out, is "highly descriptive and specific," with no attempt to create "a far-ranging theory of the nature and function of ideology *per se*." In fact, however, this is something of a false dichotomy. Any political scientist who fails to place his subject matter into some theoretical perspective is bound to be accused of what C. Wright Mills aptly termed abstracted empiricism. Schnall is no exception.

The comparative perspective is followed by a chronological one. As a result of the constant realignment of forces among the movements included in his book, there is, Schnall admits, a danger that it will be outdated before the ink is dry. One of the ways in which he attempts to overcome the problem is by including a chapter on the effect that the political "earthquake" of 1977 had on the Israeli political fringe. The chapter is limited, however, to a description of the varying fortunes of the different movements since Menachem Begin's rise to power. A number of more general developments that have taken place are completely overlooked. Perhaps the most important of these is the government's concerted attempt to redefine the boundaries of what Edward Shils calls the center and the periphery.

Thus, in a newspaper interview that sparked a great deal of controversy, Begin challenged the widely held notion that it was David Ben-Gurion who had established the Jewish state. After pointing out that the whole nation had contributed by sacrificing its dear ones, Begin went on to single out for praise the role played by the Jewish underground. Quoting the American Zionist leader, Abba Hillel Silver, he proudly asserted that the Irgun would go down in history as the "factor without which the state could not have come into being."

This attempt to legitimate the underground has also found expression in Begin's love of pomp and circumstance. Soon after entering office he suggested that the thirtieth anniversary of Israel's independence should be marked by a parade of veterans of the underground movements. Although the idea was severely criticized from all quarters, the ex-commander of the Irgun was loathe to give it up entirely. He proudly took the salute at a rather desultory ceremony in the stadium of Hebrew University.

Even more important than this rewriting of the past are the constant attacks on those charged with the task of reporting and analyzing the present. Ever since the Likud came to power there have been rumors concerning an alleged left-wing mafia at the helm of the Israel Broadcasting Authority, and some of those involved in the "conspiracy" have recently been forced to leave their jobs. These dismissals, together with instances of meddling with the news, seem to suggest that at least certain members of the government regard television and radio as their mouthpiece rather than as an independent voice.

The government's reaction to criticism of its settlement policy provides the clearest example of how the boundary between center and periphery has been redefined. In a recent Knesset debate on the settlement at Elon Moreh, later declared illegal by the Supreme Court, the government dealt with its critics from the Left by simply dismissing their motions as "anti-Zionist" and, therefore, unworthy of serious attention. While the doves are increasingly regarded as beyond the pale, the hawks are slowly becoming part of the fold. Even illegal actions such as Gush Emunim's recent occupation of the Hadassah clinic in Hebron are extolled, and cited as proof of the fact that in politics, determination pays.

To be sure, even under the Rabin government, Gush Emunim's unauthorized settlements in the occupied territories met with a great deal of vacillation. And the Likud, it must be pointed out, has not acceded to all the movement's requests. Nevertheless, Gush Emunim

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has received a much more sympathetic hearing since Begin's rise to power, and with the autonomy talks concerning the future of the West Bank under way, the movement is a force to be reckoned with.

Under Begin, then, the boundary between center and periphery has clearly moved toward the Right of the Israeli political spectrum. An analysis of this general trend would have enhanced Schnall's account of each individual group's fortunes since the Likud took office. In fact, this sort of approach would have proved beneficial to the study as a whole. There were, after all, constant shifts in the definition of political legitimacy in Israel long before Begin's rise to power; his own return from the political wilderness was among the most important of them. Ben-Gurion's iron rule about never forming a coalition government with either Herut on the extreme Right or the Communists on the exreme Left seems very distant, now that his archenemy holds the reins of power.

Wanderer

MOONSTRUCK: A MEMOIR OF MY LIFE IN A CULT. By ALLEN TATE WOOD with JACK VITEK. *Morrow. 189 pp. $8.95.*

Reviewed by ROBERT RICHMAN

ALLEN TATE WOOD was a member of Sun Myung Moon's cult for about four and one-half years, from 1969 to 1974. For a short time he held the second highest rank in Moon's U.S. organization, heading the political arm of the Unification Church in Washington. (Moon at that time lived in South Korea, his birthplace, where he had, and still holds, the largest number of disciples.) Wood's story is significant partly because, as Wood himself points out, "I drew succor from a movement alien—both literally and spiritually—from this land," while boasting forebears classically, impressively American: the explorer Meriwether Lewis, Governor Alcorn of Mississippi, and the writers Allen Tate and Caroline Gordon.

Wood grew up in Princeton, New Jersey, the privileged son of well-to-do parents. In keeping with family tradition, he attended the University of the South (better known as Sewanee), the gentleman's college in Tennessee. It was there that the *Sewanee Review* had become, under the editorship of his grandfather, the poet Allen Tate, one of the preeminent literary journals in the country. Yet by the late 60's, when Wood's narrative begins, even venerable Sewanee had become touched by the political and cultural upheavals of the time. Wood dabbled in Eastern religion, radical politics (he was a member of SDS), and drugs. Feeling what he calls a "spiritual abyss" in his soul, he left campus before graduation and hitchhiked across the country to San Francisco, a city that could claim in 1969 to be the

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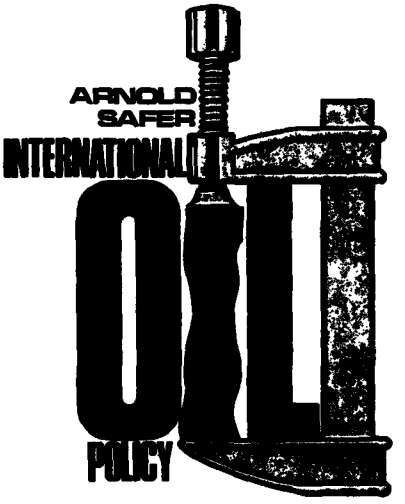

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central refuge of America's injured and exhausted, a "spiritual supermarket" for those who were homeless, without a sense of self, exiled, or in flight: "I needed to curl up and clear my mind," says Wood.

In the throes of such desperation the nearest charm works; the only place in town hospitable enough to offer food and a bed was the mission of the Unified Church. It was here that Wood first experienced the marathon lectures (designed to lower one's resistance and make indoctrination easier) on the *Divine Principle*, the book containing the body of Moon's teaching. Essentially, Moon uses the parable of Cain and Abel as an interpretative device, drawing it through all history. World War I, for example, is seen as a conflict of Cain nations (Muslim Turkey supported by Germany and Austria-Hungary) versus Abel nations (England, France, and the United States). In the contemporary world, Communism represents the Cain side of mankind, allied with Satan, and the Western democracies represent the Abel side, fallen, but close to God. History works toward restoration, and when the two sides are reconciled, the messiah will be acclaimed. A third world war is the inevitable route to this synthesis. According to Moon, the holocaust will come in 1981. Only those who have been confirmed by the messiah will survive.

BEFORE long, Wood was a full-fledged Moonie, proselytizing here and abroad, making and selling candles on the street, and marching in support of the war in Vietnam. Wood's devotion eventually earned him control over the Church's political unit, the Freedom Leadership Foundation. Here he lobbied for cutoffs of military aid to Israel, accepted funds from sources within the Nixon administration (Moon's cult was given an A-1 rating by the FBI), and organized fasts in support of the war. Once, during a mission to Cambodia, Wood remarked to an interviewer that "if American students knew the truth they would be flocking to Kennedy airport the way they did during the Hungarian revolution, demanding to fight for Cambodia's right to self-determination." All this, only a short time after Wood had been quoting H. Rap Brown in the Sewanee offices of SDS.

Wood's fall from faith began when he was dislodged from his post in a power struggle with some colleagues. He had also become, by now, wary of the extent of Moon's authority. Twice Wood was humiliated by Moon himself at group gatherings: once verbally, when Moon, in response to a query by Wood, said that "if homosexuality really gets to be a problem, you tell them to cut it off, barbecue it, put it in a shoebox, and mail it to me"—and once physically, by a kick to the rear of Wood's kneeling body. "Was I contemptible? Or was I blessed?" wondered Wood. The fact that he was able to feel ambivalent at all signaled that he was getting back on track.

The last few pages of *Moonstruck* are about Wood's life after leaving the cult. He first enlisted in the Society of Brothers in Pennsylvania—a sort of anti-cult that offered itself as a stay "against the cold existential bath of the real world"—then left to enroll in and drop out of the University of Dallas in quick succession. He next rejoined the Society of Brothers, where his new wife bore a child and his marriage dissolved.

WOOD tells his story in a syntactically poor and lifeless prose that displays not the slightest trace or influence of his distinguished literary lineage. *Moonstruck* suffers more seriously, however, from Wood's failure to investigate the impulses and motivations that make the pathology he describes so widespread among his generation. His dimensionless reporting rarely assigns a credible motive to an action; everything seems simply to happen to this feckless youth with his catch-all wish for a purely blissful life. The absence of inquiry, let alone of a spirit of inquiry, makes the book valueless as sociology, and even damages it as the lashing indictment of Moon its author seems to have had in mind.

What has Wood learned? Not much. "My family provides ample evidence of spiritual hunger," he writes retrospectively, offering the

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history of his family's accomplishments as a partial explanation for his own "hungry" decision to join Moon. But his family history is one of purposive adventure and seeking—he is, after all, descended from a poet, a novelist, and an explorer—while Wood's hunger lay in the direction of purposeless misbehavior. What he really desired, by his own admission, was to take a mystical leap *beyond* the experience of his family, that is, to run away, and this desire to escape manifested itself in many of his actions, beginning with his failure at Sewanee (though he claims—with some justification, amazingly enough—that he left college in order to experience rigor), through his extremely heavy involvement with drugs, undertaken out of a "desire for obliteration of my personal history." One wonders to what degree the appetite for self-destruction was characteristic of Wood's forebears. It did, at any rate, make Wood the perfect inductee into Moon's cult.

The startling thing, however, is that in the end, as Wood admits in the very last sentence of his narrative, he is spiritually no further along the road to maturity than he was when he started. His marriage busted, wandering from one "healer" to the next, Wood still finds it as hard as he did in college to assume a life of moral accountability. The sad lesson of *Moonstruck* is that, if the sources of such hindrances are deep-rooted, as they clearly are in Wood's case, they will probably outlast any number and kind of involvement, whether religious or political. In this respect, Wood is a paradigm of a certain 60's sensibility whose literally depressing effects are still very much with us, not only in the form of confused, lackluster individuals like Wood himself but in the more widespread political, religious, and cultural numbness of an entire class and generation.

Repudiating Liberalism

SMALL FUTURES. By RICHARD H. DE LONE FOR THE CARNEGIE COUNCIL ON CHILDREN. *Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. 258 pp. $12.95.*

Reviewed by MARC F. PLATTNER

DURING the course of the 1970's a new political outlook has increasingly come to dominate the political thought of the American Left. It is an outlook that has almost no overt connection to Marxism, that is reformist rather than revolutionary in both style and strategy, and that proclaims its attachment to political freedom and the democratic process. Yet it is characterized by a profound if not

MARC F. PLATTNER, *who writes widely on issues of social policy, is the author of* Rousseau's State of Nature *(Northern Illinois University Press).*

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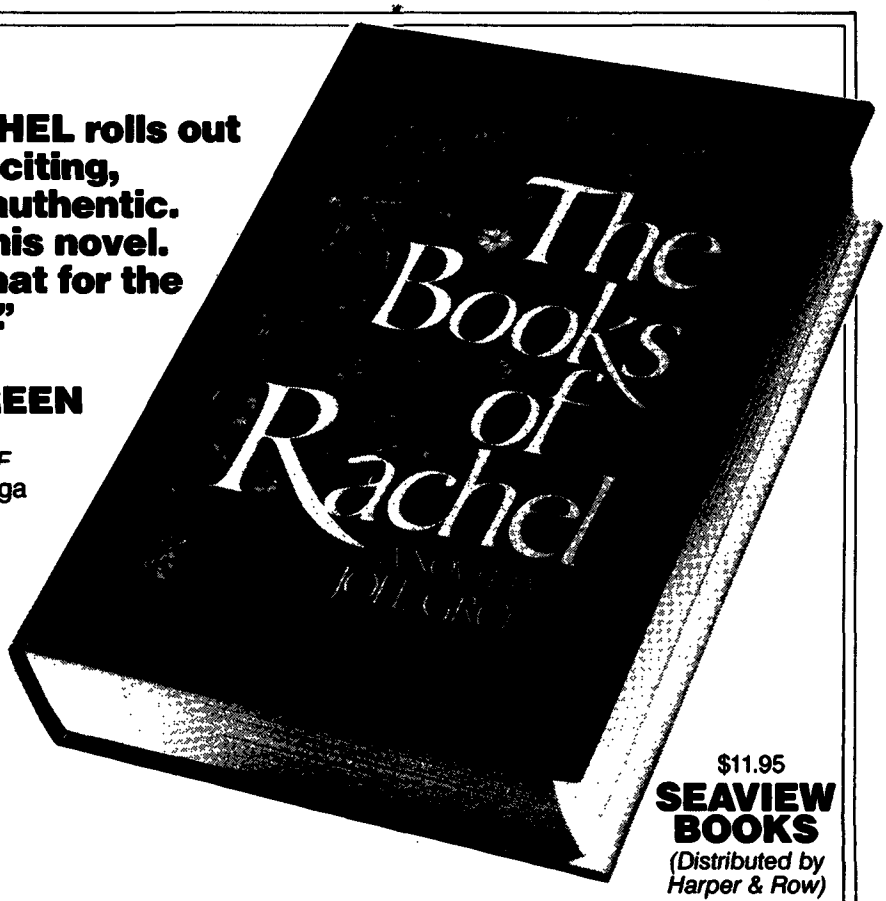

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always explicit hostility to the principles of liberalism as traditionally understood. The animating ideal of this new viewpoint is egalitarianism, and its central policy recommendation and most distinctive feature is its call for the redistribution of income. Among the leading exponents of "redistributionism" are such prominent authors as Christopher Jencks, John Rawls, and the economist Arthur Okun.

The redistributionist doctrine also seems to have found a rather surprising institutional home—the Carnegie Council on Children. This study commission, composed of Chairman Kenneth Keniston and ten other experts on issues relating to children and the family, was established by the Carnegie Corporation to "develop policy recommendations for ways in which the needs of children in the 1970's and 1980's should be met." In its earlier report, *All Our Children*, the Council had already asserted its view that the problems plaguing the American family were basically neither moral nor cultural but economic, and that income redistribution was the key to their solution. With the publication of Richard de Lone's *Small Futures*, the Council has now endorsed not only a thoroughgoing overhaul of America's socioeconomic structure but also a repudiation of its liberal political traditions.

The Council's attack on liberalism could hardly be expressed with greater explicitness. It is voiced both by de Lone in the body of the book and by Keniston in a foreword, where he makes it clear that the assault is directed "not [at] the liberalism of one wing of the Democratic party, but [at] that deep and largely implicit set of assumptions shared by both major parties and by the overwhelming majority of Americans, a world view whose origins lie in the thought of men such as Adam Smith and John Locke." The essential defect of liberalism is alleged to be the inherent conflict between its commitment to equality in the political sphere and its acceptance of inequality in the economic sphere. De Lone formulates the issue in terms of a clash between equal political *rights* and unequal economic *prerogatives*. In fact, there is no contradiction here at all. The founders of liberalism frequently and emphatically spoke of the *right* of property, and equality of rights in the political as well as the economic realm is perfectly compatible with unequal outcomes in the exercise of those rights. For example, while everyone may have an equal right to run for political office, no one is guaranteed an equal chance of succeeding. If America were committed to equality of outcomes, we would choose our public officials by lot (as the Athenian democracy did) rather than by election.

According to de Lone, this same supposed contradiction within liberalism has led to the repeated failure of American reform movements, including the Great Society initiatives of the 1960's. A telling indication of the futility of such efforts is held to be their failure to have achieved greater economic equality—i.e., a significantly more equal distribution of income—in the United States over the past 100 years. There is something rather odd about this criticism of the reformers, inasmuch as de Lone is castigating them for failing to attain a goal that he himself argues they never intended to pursue. He acknowledges that their efforts were aimed not at equalizing the distribution of income but at alleviating poverty and at promoting equality of opportunity. And he further notes that "no specific degree of equality of condition, no desired distribution of goods, resources, power, or influence, is implied by equality of opportunity."

But de Lone is not content to draw the issue sharply between the liberal ethos and the redistributionist ethos, and then to argue for the superiority of the latter. Instead, he devotes a considerable portion of his book and its principal rhetorical thrust to arguing that liberalism has been a failure even in terms of fulfilling *its own*

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goals, that it has been utterly unsuccessful in alleviating poverty or providing equality of opportunity. In seeking to establish this contention, de Lone engages in an incredibly selective and tendentious use of evidence. On the issue of social mobility, where a great deal of sophisticated research has recently been done, de Lone simply ignores much of it. (For example, he does not confront some of the central findings in Christopher Jencks's *Inequality*, which was also funded by the Carnegie Corporation, and which concludes that in the United States there is "an enormous amount of economic mobility from one generation to the next.") Moreover, he often distorts the views of those scholars he does cite. Even Michael Harrington, in a laudatory review of *Small Futures* in the *New Republic*, felt compelled to acknowledge that de Lone, in his use of Stephan Thernstrom's research on social mobility, "treats complex matters too casually," and "only borrows from it those elements which fit in with his own argument."

But de Lone also employs a much more effective tactic in his attempt to discredit liberalism's performance in making progress toward its own goals: he alters the definitions of both poverty and equal opportunity. In a prosperous society, de Lone asserts, "poverty is not a state in itself. It is a *symptom* of broad social inequality." Hence he argues in favor of defining poverty by the purely relative standard of one-half the national median income rather than by a fixed "poverty line." This would mean, of course, that even a substantial increase in the standard of living of the poor could not reduce poverty if proportionate advances were also made by the rest of the population. In short, the issue of poverty is transformed by fiat from a matter of need to a matter of distributional inequality.

Now, to be sure, since notions of what constitute necessities vary in different times and places, some relative considerations must come into play in attempting to establish a sensible criterion of poverty. But to endorse a wholly relative standard of poverty, as de Lone does, is absurd. On the basis of such a standard, one could actually eliminate poverty without improving the material conditions of the poor at all. Simply take away income from the non-poor until the median income is sufficiently reduced, and you will have achieved the statistical abolition of poverty.

THE definitional problem regarding equality of opportunity is much more complicated. De Lone himself never discusses it directly, and it is impossible here to give more than a very cursory account of this issue. In the first place, equal opportunity requires an absence of government-sponsored privileges or restrictions that favor some citizens over others in the quest for advancement. But beyond that, the traditional understanding of America as a land of opportunity was

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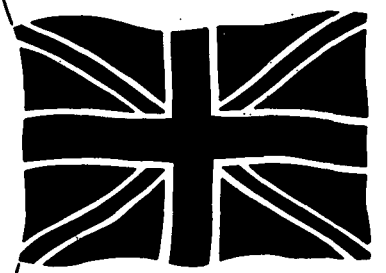

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that the children of the poor, if they had ability and were willing to work hard, could realistically expect to rise to an income level and occupational status above that of their parents. Those whose ability and/or efforts were particularly great might even make the transition all the way from "rags to riches." And on a much broader scale, it would be possible for entire groups that began in poverty to progress over several generations to a level of socioeconomic parity with the population as a whole (a goal that many immigrant groups have now achieved or even surpassed). With the important exception of black Americans—where there are signs that greater progress is now being achieved—this is a standard that the United States has largely attained.

De Lone, however, adopts a newer, more abstract, and vastly more stringent criterion of equal opportunity. There must be "equal life chances" for all children: those born to the poorest and least educated parents must have the same statistical chance of attaining economic and occupational success as those born to the richest and most highly educated parents. This, of course, is a standard that the United States does not come close to achieving. But it is also a standard that no other society comes close to achieving. De Lone cites an article by Seymour Martin Lipset in support of the point that rates of social mobility in the United States are no higher than those in other industrialized nations, and concludes that despite the "lingering feudal traditions" of European societies, "the facts of socioeconomic mobility are much the same in Europe and the United States." Characteristically, de Lone neglects to mention a central point in Lipset's essay—namely, that the nations of the Soviet bloc are no nearer to attaining absolute equality of opportunity than the capitalist nations of the West. It would appear, then, that neither liberalism nor a capitalist economy is the critical obstacle preventing the achievement of full equality of opportunity.

The central factor working against the attainment of complete equality of opportunity in both liberal and Communist societies is clearly the differential material and (especially) cultural advantages bestowed by parents upon their children. There is an obvious solution to this problem: take children away from their parents and raise them in a common institutional setting. One can understand, however, why the Carnegie Council might have found it impolitic to offer this recommendation as its major contribution to the national debate on "family policy." In any case, de Lone strives to minimize the family's role as a source of inequality, putting forth a strained and unconvincing "situational theory of child development" which instead identifies class as the key factor. Accordingly, his proposed solution to the problem of unequal opportunity turns out to be not a familyless society, but a classless one.

THE chief practical recommendation of *Small Futures* is a "credit tax plan" for redistributing income that "would reduce the ratio between the top and bottom fifth of earners from its current eight to one to something like four to one. . . ." While this would by definition reduce inequality of condition, it is hard to see how it would do very much toward achieving de Lone's criterion of equal opportunity. It is also hard to see what reason there would be, given de Lone's principles, for stopping at so relatively modest a reshuffling of economic resources, not to mention leaving untouched the other sorts of advantages that more favorably situated parents would still be able to pass on to their children. Sure enough, the last two pages of *Small Futures* reveal that income redistribution is but a prelude to the "future themes of egalitarian policy." These would include policies aimed at eradicating "inequalities in power, control of resources, control of time, richness of human experience and, correlatively, in the array of human potentials each individual has a chance to exercise. . . ." At last, the perverse but inexorable logic of de Lone's argument becomes clear. If everyone in society is assigned the same socioeconomic status, such inequalities in child-rearing as still persist will no longer produce any inequality of opportunity, for there will no longer be any differential opportunities to strive for. In this sense, at least, absolute equality of condition would unquestionably be accompanied by absolute equality of opportunity.

Given the incredible degree of government intervention in people's lives that would be required to achieve and maintain such equality of condition, it is easy to understand de Lone's hostility to liberalism, with its commitment to personal freedom and to a separation of the public and private spheres. The extreme conclusions of *Small Futures* reveal where some of the radically egalitarian premises of redistributionism lead if they are zealously followed through. Still, it is probably safe to assume that more sober advocates of income redistribution like Rawls and Okun, who remain attached to important elements of the liberal spirit, would be unwilling to endorse de Lone's chilling utopian fantasies. But what is one to make of the fact that they were unanimously approved by the members of the Carnegie Council on Children?

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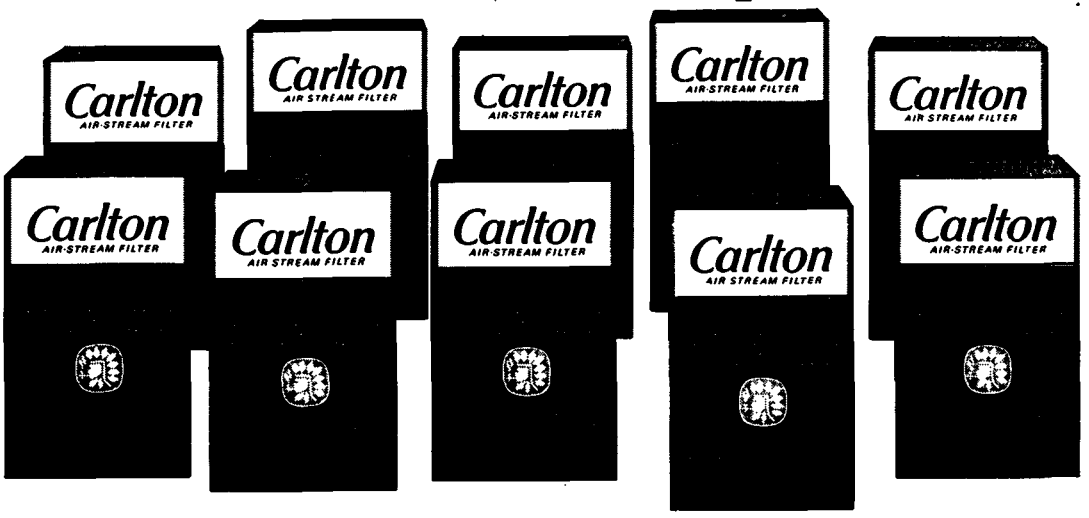

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Merit	8	0.6
Merit Menthol	8	0.6

	Tar mg./cig.	Nicotine mg./cig.
Parliament Lights	9	0.6
Salem Lights	10	0.8
Vantage	11	0.8
Vantage Menthol	11	0.8
Winston Lights	13	0.9

Carlton is lowest.

Less than 1 mg. tar, 0.1 mg. nic.

Of all brands, lowest...Carlton Box: less than 0.5 mg. tar and 0.05 mg. nicotine av. per cigarette, FTC Report May '78.

Warning: The Surgeon General Has Determined That Cigarette Smoking Is Dangerous to Your Health.

Box: Less than 0.5 mg. "tar", 0.05 mg. nicotine; Soft Pack and Menthol: 1 mg. "tar", 0.1 mg. nicotine av. per cigarette, FTC Report May '78.

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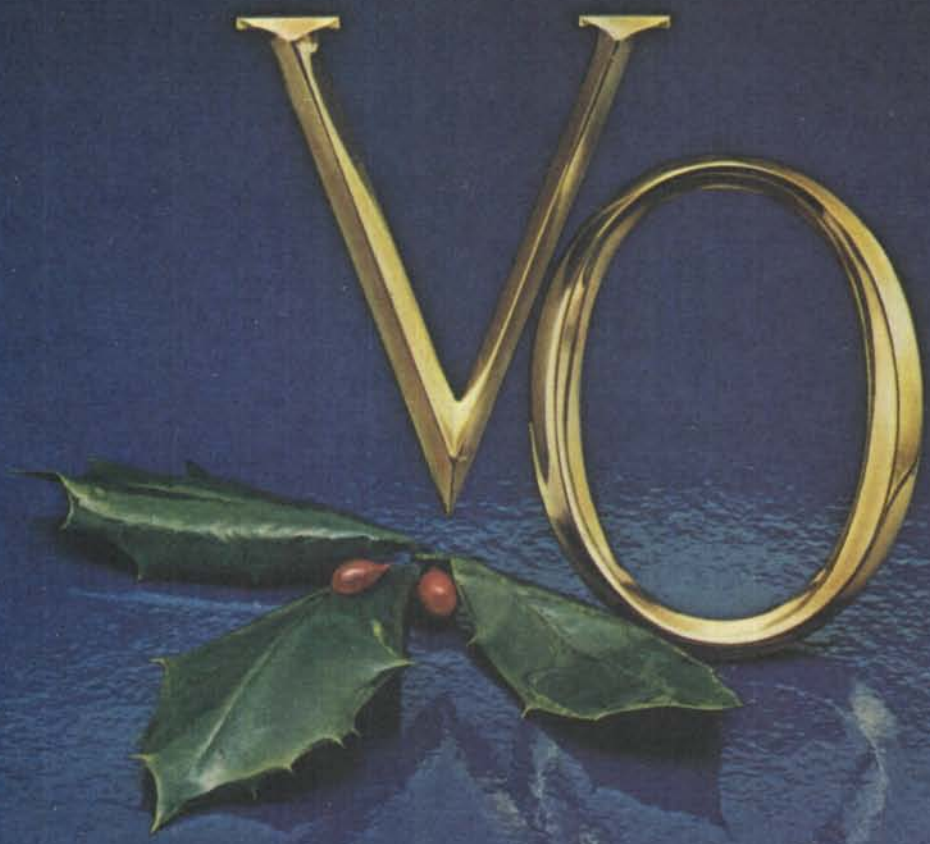
The Standard of Giving.



Seagram's V.O.
The symbol of imported luxury. Bottled in Canada.
Enjoy our quality in moderation.

Canadian whisky. A blend. 6 years old. 86.8 Proof. Seagram Distillers Co., N.Y.C. Gift-wrapped at no extra charge.

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